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GILBERT GURNEY.

BY THE
AUTHOR OF "SAYINGS AND DOINGS,"
"LOVE AND PRIDE,"
ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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GILBERT GURNEY.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN I awoke in the morning—or I should say afternoon, since it was considerably past twelve before I opened my eyes—all the proceedings at Wolverhampton House appeared like a dream. The audacity of Daly—the mischief he had committed upon a kind and confiding friend who apparently did all she could to make him welcome and happy, seemed too gross and glaring to be real; and it was not until I saw on the table by my bed-side, a rose which had graced the bosom of the charming

Mrs. Fletcher Green, that I was assured that I had really seen a bull on a staircase, and heard of the Pandean minstrels eating the Prince's supper in the Pavilion. I had carefully placed the half-faded flower in a glass of water, and greatly rejoiced to see it look refreshed by my delicate attention.

I admit, however, that a reproachful feeling diffused itself over my mind, when I recollected under what very peculiar circumstances I had half taken and half received this precious bud from my charming new acquaintance. I had treasured the gift—if gift it had been—and placed it at my bed-side on the very morning that my kind and active friend had undertaken to work my eternal happiness by a marriage with my dear unsophisticated Emma Haines.—But what then? Mrs. Fletcher Green was only an acquaintance—a very delightful one—much Emma's senior. I thought her indeed rather advanced in life—I being just one and twenty; and she, as I afterwards had occasion to know, three years under thirty. But so

completely are our judgments and opinions, especially in that particular, regulated by comparison, that I felt a kind of respect for her age mingled with my admiration of her accomplishments.

Mrs. Fletcher Green was evidently pleased with *me*, and *that*, as everybody must admit, was a very powerful reason for my being charmed with *her*. I was determined to call upon her, and improve the acquaintance; and, strange to say, I almost hoped that Daly had not got so far the start of me in rising as to be on his way to Tenby to open the negotiations with the Haineses. It was not that Mrs. Fletcher Green had entirely superseded Emma in so short a time, or that she had carried my heart by a *coup de main*, but she was so graceful, so polished, so agreeable, knew everybody, and everything about everybody; and was so exquisitely good-tempered, and had such eyes! I believe a heart just of age was never proverbial for constancy; yet there was a striking difference between my feelings towards the fair

widow and those which bound me to my first love—I cannot conveniently describe the dissimilitude, but I was conscious of it, and yet equally conscious that I ought not to be so much interested about one lady, when on the very point of concluding a negotiation, if possible, with another.

When I called at Daly's lodgings, I found the bird flown. He had indeed afforded me a new and remarkable proof of the activity of his friendship. He had started, as his servant told me, before eight, after little more than an hour's sleep. He had left a note, in which he desired me to confide in his judgment and discretion, and informed me that he would write to report progress the moment any progress had been made. His servant appeared particularly solicitous to know when I expected his master back; and his anxiety seemed to me scarcely equal to that of a half gentlemanly looking man whom I found at the door in conversation with Redmond, who held a longish slip of paper in his hand, which after my sincere declaration

that I had no notion how long he would be out of town, he returned to a long black book which he had previously carried under his arm, and which now that the paper was replaced within its folds, he deposited in a pocket made in the inside of one of the lapels of his coat.

I had become so accustomed to the society and conversation of my volatile friend, that when I turned from his lodgings I felt as if I had lost part of myself now that I was left alone. I strolled along the streets as far as Wolverhampton House, where I left my ticket, and afterwards sauntered down what was then imagined to be *the* promenade of London, Bond Street—the utter destruction of which as a fashionable lounge by the splendid creation of Regent Street, or any other possible cause, none of the beaux of those days even remotely anticipated. Still I felt dull and *distract*; and when after having descended the hill of St. James's Street, and passed half way along Pall Mall, I recognized a friend of my theatrical Mæcenæ, coming out of an auction room,

where an extensive book sale was going on, I was quite delighted! I scarcely expected, as I had abandoned dramatic literature, and absented myself from the Thespian votaries, that he would recognize me! On the contrary, his plump rosy cheeks, purpled with warmth and kindness, as he held out his hand to take mine, and protested that I was the very man he wanted most particularly to see.

Hull—for so was my warm-hearted friend called—was a very extraordinary person. He knew the business of everybody in London better than the people themselves. He happened to know everything that was going forward in all circles—mercantile, political, fashionable, literary, or theatrical; in addition to all matters connected with military and naval affairs, agriculture, finance, art and science—everything came alike to him—to *his* inquiring eye no mystery continued undiscovered;—from his attentive ear no secret remained concealed. He was plump—short—with an intelligent countenance, and near-sighted—with a constitution

and complexion fresh enough to look forty, at a time when *I* believed him to be at least four times the age;—we had a joke against him, in those days, as to his antiquity, in which he heartily and good-naturedly joined, until at last we got him to admit—and I almost think, believe—that he had sold gunpowder to King Charles the Second, and dined more than once with the witty Lord Rochester.

“Wanted to see me?” said I—“as how?”

“Wanted you to come and meet a few friends at my cottage at Mitcham,” said Hull—“all plain and simple—good wine, I promise you, and pleasant company—but you are such a fellow, my dear friend. Pooh, pooh! don’t tell me—there’s no catching you—eh, I say—I have heard all about the cakes, the cow and the Countess, the Pandæans in the pavilion, and the dead dace in the drawing-room.”

“What do you mean?” said I—not imagining it possible that events which had so recently occurred, should have already obtained such publicity.

“O you dog,” said Hull—“*I* happen to know—my dear Gurney—it’s no use trying to hoax me—I say—Daly did it—he, he!—you know it—eh—”

“Not I, upon my honour,” said I; which was true—“do you know Daly?”

“Know him!”—exclaimed my friend—“know Daly!—why, my dear Sir, I have known him these forty years!”

“Daly!” said I, “why he is not thirty years old!”

“Perhaps not forty,” said Hull; “but I knew his father more than forty years ago—lived in St. Mary Axe—in the sugar line—dead, now—Daly, your friend is a deuce of a fellow—you dined with him yesterday at his lodgings?”

“I did,” said I, staring—“but how did you find *that* out?”

“Find it out, my dear friend!” replied Hull, “I do nothing in the world but find out—I saw the boiled leg of lamb and spinach which you had for dinner—eh—wasn’t it so?”

I knew that unless he had been in three

places at once, he could not have seen all our legs of lamb ; so I contented myself with admitting what I had no desire to deny.

“ Splendid fellow, Daly,” said Hull—“ capital hock he has got.”

“ Do you dine with him frequently ?” said I.

“ Never, my dear friend ; never dined with him in my life,” said Hull ; “ but I know where he gets his hock—six guineas and a half the dozen—come down to Mitcham, you shall taste some of the very same batch. Great creature, Daly—magnificent style, I’m told—splendid service of plate, and all that.”

“ Plate !” said I.

“ Superb,” said Hull—“ I happen to know the fact.”

“ My dear Sir,” said I, “ I should say, a dozen spoons and forks were the extent of his service, as you call it.”

“ Well,” said Hull, “ what does he want with more ? Too bad—the cakes—eh—and the cow—all over Town. However, now to business, as I have done work for to-day—

when will you come to Mitcham—name your time?”

“ I shall be very happy,” said I—“ but what do you mean by having done work ?”

“ Here,” said he, drawing from one of his pockets a very small dirty black-letter book—“ this is all I shall do to-day—my pursuit, you know—eh—old books—rare books—I don’t care what I give so as I can secure them—this is a tract of 1486—seventeen pages originally—five only wanting—two damaged—got it for seventy-two pounds ten shillings—Caxton—only one other copy extant—that in the British Museum.”

“ Seventy-two pounds for *that* !” said I.

“ To be sure,” replied Hull—“ why, my dear Sir, it is not worth *my* while to come out of the city unless I spend seventy or eighty pounds in the morning—I cannot afford the time for less.”

“ And what is it about ?” said I, innocently.

“ Why, I do *not* happen to know *that*,” said Hull—“ it is an essay, I believe, to prove that

Edward the Fourth never had the tooth-ach; but it is, as you see, in Latin, and I don't read Latin."

"Then why buy it?" said I.

"Buy!" exclaimed he, looking at me through his glass with an expression of astonishment—"I buy thousands of books!—pooh! pooh! millions, my dear Sir, in the course of a year, but I never think of reading them—my dear friend, I have no time to read."

I confess I did not exactly comprehend the character of the bibliomania which appeared to engross my friend, nor the particular gratification which the purchase of the unreadable works seemed to afford him. But he only curled up his mouth, as much as to say that I was a dunce, and that there was a sort of delight—felt in common with magpies, I presume—of picking up objects and hiding them away in dark holes and corners. As for his hospitable invitation, I resolved to accept it, and fix an early day—it would kill some of the time I was destined to pass in suspense until I heard

from Tenby; and give me an opportunity of cultivating the acquaintance of one who, with certain little peculiarities, evidently possessed a sound judgment, and therefore a cheerful and liberal disposition, and above all, a kind heart.

“ Mine is but a box,” said Hull, “ all humble and lowly—there will be a bed for you at the inn, and a garden full of gooseberries and currants to stroll about.”

“ And pleasant pastime, too,” said I. “ I, for one think the despised fruits of our country, are amongst the most delicious.”

“ Despised!” said Hull—“ pooh ! pooh ! nobody can despise gooseberries and currants like mine—I have thousands of them!—pooh ! pooh ! currants as big as marbles ! and gooseberries larger than hens’ eggs !”

“ I’ll try them, depend upon it,” said I—“ what say you to to-morrow ?”

“ My dear friend, the very day I was going to fix,” said Hull—“ I knew your friend Daly was gone—went out of Town by eight this

morning—eh—come down to Mitcham—you'll meet one of your Haymarket friends ——”

“ Ah,” said I, “ Mr. Hull, that's a sore point—that infernal farce of mine—I shall never get over it.”

“ Infernal !” said Hull—“ what d'ye mean by infernal ?—I wish we had more people who could write such farces—infernal indeed.”

“ Yet,” said I, “ it was condemned.”

“ Umph,” said Hull, lowering his voice, and whispering in my ear, “ I could tell you something about *that*—I happen to know—and so do you—”

“ Indeed I don't,” said I.

“ Don't you know something about the ‘ Wag in the Windmill,’ ” said Hull, “ coming out the week after next ?”

“ Not I—”

“ Pooh ! pooh ! don't tell me,” said Hull—
“ I happen to know the author.”

“ Do you ?” said I, “ I don't.”

“ Come come, you dog, that won't do,” said he ; “ what does the Chronicle mean the day

before yesterday—did you see the allusion?”

“No,” said I, “I never see the Chronicle.”

“Never see the Chronicle!” exclaimed Hull, “don’t tell me—that won’t do—you see ALL the papers. My dear friend, the allusion to *you* is plain as a pikestaff.”

“I give you my word,” said I, “that I have written not one line since my failure, nor ever will write again.”

“How could they have got hold of it, I wonder,” said Hull, archly. “I’ll find out before I go into the city. However, to-morrow you come to me—dine punctually at five—early folks in the country—none of your supper-time dinners there—remember, a bed for yourself—capital stables for your horses at the inn—civil people—very attentive to all *my* guests—know it would not do if they were not—hundreds of people go there in the course of the summer from my cottage. Good day—good day—you won’t come any farther with me, I know you won’t—city

work don't suit you—God bless you—pooh !
pooh !—remember five !”

And away he went, leaving me amazed at the activity of his mind and the universality of his information. I was vexed to find that I was coupled with a new authorship, and turned into the first coffee-house I came near in order to read the paragraph of which, according to Hull's declaration, I was the object. In doing this, I had a double purpose—first, to see how I was pointed out to the public ; and secondly, if the identification were very complete, to write a letter to the Morning Chronicle, contradicting the statement ; being at that period of my life perfectly ignorant of the utter carelessness of society about such affairs in general, and about me or any of my concerns more particularly ; and also then unconvinced that a reply to a newspaper attack resembles very much the attempt of Hercules to crop the Hydra, without the slightest chance of his ultimate success ; or to descend rapidly from the sublime, like the task of the tinker, who

in trying to stop one hole, invariably makes two.

I accordingly turned to the paper, and found that the paragraph was one of those "we understands," which so frequently crowd the columns of the daily journals, and hinting more ambiguously than even I had expected, that the author of the forthcoming "Wag in the Windmill," although unsuccessful in his first attempt, had every chance of making ample amends for his early defeat, in his new production. It was evidently meant good-naturedly, and I laid down the Chronicle, wondering who in the world could have taken the trouble to vindicate my presumed effort; little suspecting that my omniscient friend Hull was himself the author of the paragraph, which he had no doubt believed would greatly please me, and contribute to heal the wounds which a public verdict had inflicted upon my personal vanity. As my acquaintance with Hull increased in age, I had many opportunities of convincing myself of the inherent kindness of his disposi-

tion, and his readiness to do what he imagined to be a service to his friends whenever it lay in his power.

I confess I was very glad I had met him, and made an engagement to visit him—for my mind was distracted, and my heart almost ached with anxiety as to the result of Daly's expedition; and those who have felt as I did then, will readily admit that new scenes and new acquaintances are, of all things in the world, most desirable under circumstances, where there exists a wish or even a hope of distancing thoughts and reflections which are inevitably associated with persons whom we have known and places which we have visited, while in the society of the loved and lamented one, absent only from the sight, but present always to the imagination.

Strange to say, after quitting Hull, I almost immediately encountered my con-disciple of Lincoln's Inn on his return homewards from plodding, to which it appeared he had become

infinitely more reconciled since he had lost his sympathetic friend—myself.

To a man really mixing in the world, in the habit of constant intercourse with the principal actors on the stage—not of the theatre—but of real life: men who by their position in society, their personal rank, or official importance, are in fact the objects of daily contemplation and discussion to the eyes of those not so circumstanced, nothing in the world can be so dull and ridiculous as the speculative conversations of the respectable portion of society who blending with personal importance in their own sphere, great acuteness of mind, pertinacity of opinion, and inquisitiveness of research, discuss the reported movements, and probable intentions of people whom they know only by hearsay—call it fame if you will—and of whose actual proceedings they have no idea but what they glean from the misinformed collectors of fashionable intelligence for the newspapers, and of whose real characters or domestic pur-

suits they understand infinitely less than they do of the cabinet secrets of the King of Ava, or the proceedings of the Privy Council at Tooramoorotatewangy.

If I have since felt lassitude and weariness at the common place suppositions of these white-waistcoated wise-acres, relieved only by a sort of indignation at the doltish stupidity of their fancies and calculations, I doubt very much whether I was ever so much worried in after life by their elaborated nonsense as I was by Tom Hickson's conversation on the day to which I now refer. It was now some time since I had emerged from the cellar of Stone Buildings, led as it were up the Glacis, by his suggestion and at his invitation. It was to *him* I owed my introduction to the actors, and to his genius and addiction to theatrical pursuits was I indebted for having forsaken the study to which he now appeared devoted. He had however subsided into the jog-trot routine which at his instigation I had abandoned, and in consequence of the start a-head which I had taken,

rendered more effective, perhaps, by his retrograde movement, I felt myself, as the people call it "bored to death," by his platitudes—his suppositions—his inquiries—in short—his nonsense.

Thus it is—what delights, enchants, and enchains us at one period of life, becomes by comparison with other things, when we return to it, flat, stale, and unprofitable. I remember when I was at school—days to which, as I have already said, I never recur with any superabundant pleasure, I had established in my mind that a certain Mrs. Burgoyne—we called her Mother Burgoyne—had a character for making apple tarts, which stood high in my estimation, and in that of all my school-fellows; she had, moreover, the reputation of being a witch, but that, whether it were true or not, did not, in any important degree, interfere with her management of the pies, and *certes*, never did the finest *patisserie* of the unrivalled Jenkins, of Burlington House celebrity in those times, delight me more than

the *Tourte à la Bourgoine* of my early days.

Passing through the Town in which I had received—no education—but where my exemplary mother had deposited sundry quarterly payments of cash as the *quid pro quo*—for my instruction, (baffled by my own idleness and stupidity,) and having a friend with me, who had accompanied me in a visit to the school-house, play-ground, and all the rest of it, I desired the waiter at the inn, to be sure to have some of Mrs. Burgoyne's tarts in the second course of our inn dinner. The man stared—I concluded that my fair sorceress was defunct—no—she was alive and merry; but to my surprise the man, who knew the “fascinating creature” by name, declared that however unjustifiable the imputation of witchery might be, her tarts were things not eatable. Still I insisted, and the tarts were produced—and any thing more detestably filthy never were seen. I taxed the waiter, who seemed to enjoy the joke against me excessively, with a falling

off in the manufacture, perhaps attributable to the increased age of the manufacturer—but, no,—he assured me that the tarts were the same as ever, and it was only I that was changed. I believe in the sequel I was obliged to admit the justice of his decision; and, in the course of my after life I have had a thousand occasions to justify it. Return to a place which you have fancied a paradise, after some ten or fifteen years' ramble over the world; it remains the same, but the ideas have expanded, the eye has rested upon flood and field, upon lake and mountain, and upon sea and torrent: when you reach the desired haven, after your voyage, although hearts may beat as kindly, and eyes beam as brightly as ever, still the *locale* invariably disappoints you. A man born in Lincoln, or in Norwich, or in Nottingham, comes to London, and passes some ten or twelve years of his life—he left his birth-place at fifteen or sixteen—rely upon it, although he may admire St. Paul's, and be pleased with Guildhall, or even admit the length of the Metropolitan Streets, the recollection of High

Street, or the Market-Place, or the Castle Hill, or something peculiar to his own native town, is permanently fixed in his imagination as infinitely superior to them all; nor is it till he returns to his favourite spot that he finds how entirely first impressions have possessed him, and how egregiously mistaken he has been in the institution of his comparisons.

My friend Tom Hickson was *my* Castle Hill, *my* Market-Place—*my* High-street—I thought I never heard any man say such silly things—he seemed to me to talk “Morning Post”—all his observations were copied nearly *verbatim* from that fashionable paper, which at that time was exclusively devoted to gossip, whence it was clear to me he had learned to string a parcel of names together, and attribute to the specified individuals, proceedings of which they were themselves entirely ignorant. He announced to me the arrival in London of some man, of whose departure from town three days before, I was perfectly aware; hinted at a marriage in high life as likely to take place during the

following week, which I knew had gone off altogether during the last fortnight; and gave me a confidential account of a *faux pas* between Lord L—— and Lady M——, in which there was not one word of truth, the whole history of which, as Daly had told it me, I like my friend Hull, “happened to know,” was furnished to the newspapers by the aforesaid lord, under the impression that the object of his pursuit would, by the paragraph, be either frightened or induced into committing the very peccadillo which he announced to the public by anticipation.

Hickson too continued his addiction to the theatre—talked of scarcely anything else—to *be* sure, he had not written a farce and failed—to *me* the subject was odious, and I declare I rejoiced excessively when he apologised for leaving me so early, inasmuch as he was engaged to dine at some extremely convivial club of which he was an honorary member, in order to initiate two novices into the arcana of the society, by blinding their eyes, daubing their faces with mustard, and then making them

smoke pipes, into the bowls of which, gunpowder had been previously introduced sufficient to blow the said pipes to atoms ; a joke which although some preceding dunce had suffered the loss of an eye by the explosion, was still considered extremely good, and to which all the aspirants for admission into the very comical community were obliged to submit.

Many things, I admit, combined to excite this distaste to my early acquaintance—I knew him best when I knew Emma Haines first—that was an association, and one which I wished especially to avoid—I could not hear from Daly for some days. I dreaded to think the time which must necessarily elapse.—Then *that* Mrs. Fletcher Green worried me,—what to do I did not know,—dinner was to be eaten—or at least the ceremony to be gone through—and the evening to be disposed of afterwards ! After some self-debating, I determined to go to the Opera—I knew Mrs. Fletcher Green had a box there—I would find it out, and even if I dared not approach it—for I really, where self was con-

cerned, was very shy—I at least could watch her from afar, and judge by what I saw, the general tenour of her conduct, and whether she seemed to be as agreeable to everybody else as she most assuredly had been to me.

This scheme I put into execution. In those days ladies wore fans, upon which the plot of the whole house was developed—each circle, each box, with its owner's name, was printed and published; but in these later and more degenerate days, so many great ladies only hire other peoples' boxes for the night, and so many great gentlemen let theirs the same way, that such directions would be of no more use than the Court Guide is, in giving us the addresses of people who take ready-furnished houses from people who are ready to part with them during their convenient absence in the country or on the Continent. From one of these, then useful directories, I gained the wished for intelligence, and accordingly posted myself in the alley of the pit, where I could command a perfect view of the fascinating widow, who was on this special night accompanied by a

fair creature, something younger than herself, and not quite so handsome. The difference of age is so well managed in large assemblies, that I was not quite prepared to decide whether the junior lady might not be daughter of the senior one—I hardly thought it probable, even if it were possible, and Daly, in all he had said about Mrs. Fletcher Green, and her agreeable house, and her agreeable parties, and her agreeable fortune, had never once mentioned that there was such a thing as a Miss F. G. in existence.

I watched her very attentively during the evening—her vivacity seemed continuous and unwearable. A rapid succession of young men, middle-aged men, and old men, appeared in her box; and I could hear the joyous tones of her voice frequently louder than the moanings of a wretched captive, in green crape, with tin fetters, who was growling out her grief on the stage; indeed, although she had professed herself to me the most devoted admirer of Italian music, it did not appear to me that she took the

slightest notice, or paid the smallest attention to the business of the stage. Still I saw she was the “admired of all,” and I fancied I was the “admired of *her*”—*laudari à laudatâ*. Ten times at least I resolved to go boldly to the box, and share her favours with her other visiters ; but ten times my heart sank within me. Whenever I felt a want of confidence in myself, my thoughts reverted to Emma Haines, and I asked myself if I should like to see *her* going on so gaily, and noisily, and happily, and carelessly, as Mrs. Fletcher Green was? But then the case was different—she was a widow, and had no husband to controul her, no partner of domestic happiness to share her pleasures and (if she ever could have any,) her sorrows. However, I thought, perhaps, it was better matters should remain as they were : what possible good could I do by increasing my intimacy with this gay woman of fortune, when, if Daly’s kind and zealous exertions brought about the other affair, she might not, after all, be the sort of person I should choose as the intimate friend of Emma, and if

I judged Emma aright, not the sort of person Emma would choose for herself?

For that night I contented myself with watching the evanishment of my bright star from the sphere which she adorned and illuminated. I felt afraid of encountering her. I went to the fire-place in the hall, although the "fire was fled," and half fearful of being seen, beheld her tripping like a sylph down the little stair-case from the pit tier, in which her box was situated. I heard loud calls for "Mrs. Fletcher Green's carriage"—I saw her looking all round and round—at length her eye caught mine, she instantly dragged a huge grenadier looking fellow, upon whose arm she was leaning, across the lobby, in order to shake hands with me, and scold me for not having called in the morning. I made a sort of stammering apology, and felt wonderfully relieved when I heard one of the stentors of the outer lobby proclaiming that "Mrs. Fletcher Green's carriage stopped the way." The man who was with her was particularly odious to me—he had

curly black hair, and a high white forehead, great sparkling eyes, and a row of teeth like ivory, which he incessantly exhibited by a sort of perpetual grin over the heads of all the surrounding crowd. The attendant sylph was escorted by a more reasonable person, of the middle age of life, from whom she appeared to divert all her attention in order to look at *me*, while Mrs. Green was talking to me; and the moment the carriage was announced, and they passed on, I saw her pull my fair widow back to inquire who I was, and then I saw the odious grenadier laugh.

“Ah,” thought I, as the groupe vanished among the cocked hats of the footmen, and the torches of the link boys, “it won’t do.” Nevertheless, I resolved upon calling the next day, before I took my departure for Hull’s house, at Mitcham.

The morning came, and I put my scheme into execution, and proceeded to her residence, which was near Park Lane, and while going, I could not entirely divest myself of a con-

sciousness that, admitting the feeling which the widow's smiles and conversation had excited, I was behaving ill—shamefully ill—to somebody; either to Mrs. Fletcher Green, or to Miss Emma Haines—and yet—recollect—I was young, and ardent, and thoughtless. I knocked at the door—the fair tenant of the mansion was out—at least she was not “at home.” But I was perfectly convinced, from the manner of her porter, that I was denied the privilege of the *entrée*, only because my person was not known, and my name had not yet been inscribed in her visiting list. I left my card, and strolled into the Park, meaning to return in time to mount my gig and drive down to the Tusculum of my hospitable friend.

When I reached my lodgings I found a dear delicate three-cornered note, written in the most delightfully unintelligible hand, by dear Mrs. Fletcher Green herself, confirming my suspicion as to the cause of my non-admission when I called, and begging me to come *sans façon*, to meet Lady Wolverhampton at dinner—a very

small party, and very agreeable people—I was engaged, and could therefore do nothing but send an apology. I confess I regretted it, and I believe, for a moment, entertained a thought of throwing over my Mitchamites, and accepting the invitation to the widow's—but if such an idea did flash into my mind, it was only to be rejected with disdain—Hull's kindness and hospitality did not merit such a slur. So I wrote my answer, despatched it—jumped into my *carriage*, and drove off for the country.

In those days men drove “gigs” as they since have driven stanhopes, tilburys, dennets, and cabriolets, and I rather piqued myself upon my “turn out;” my chestnut horse was a fast trotter, and in little more than three quarters of an hour, from Westminster bridge, I reached mine host's retreat, the locality of which was specially distinguished by its facing the common, and looking infinitely neater and more rural than the neighbouring houses, whose London loving owners had decorated their hermitages, villas, cots, and cottages with knockers,

lamps, and brass-plates, one of which specially indicated not only that the red-brick edifice before me was "Belle vue Lodge," but that its respectable owner's name was "Mr. Blutch."

When I drove up to the gate of Hull's house, I saw his good natured face peering over the hedge which separated his garden from the road, like "a rose in June," flowering on its native stem—in a moment he was at his gate, and in another I had set my foot in his domain, a little bijou of neatness, niceness, prettiness, and sweetness. I saw company in the garden heard laughter in the bowers, and casting my eyes through two French windows which opened on the lawn, beheld a table covered for eight. The roses, the mignonette, the heliotropes, all combined their fragrance to refresh the air, and although from its proximity to the high-way, Hull's servant had to brush the plants as he did his coat, every morning, to get rid of the dust, it was what the most fastidious critic must have pronounced a delightful little place.

Some of the assembled party were unknown

to me, although none of them were unknown to fame; an enthusiastic poet, a witty and agreeable barrister, the editor of a weekly newspaper, a fashionable preacher, and an opulent city merchant, then one of the sheriffs of London, added to one of the popular actors with whom I was previously acquainted, formed a society, which, from its miscellaneous character, promised a great treat to one who like myself, at that time of my life, professed to be only a listener. The sequel, however, was a disappointment. Every one of the guests was celebrated for something, and each one was jealous of his neighbour. Hull, who pooh pooled them about in his best style, endeavoured to draw them out, and force every man to say or do something to contribute to the general amusement; but it was evidently an effort; the poet had a sovereign contempt for the barrister, and whenever he fired a pun, preserved the most imperturbable gravity. The barrister, who was moreover a critic, irritated the actor, who hated the newspaper editor, for the tone he had adopted in his theatrical

reviews. The clergyman kept aloof from any controversy with the Thespian, and the sheriff, who was worth a couple of hundred thousand pounds, despised the whole party, and set them down as a parcel of paupers who were obliged to get their bread by the exercise of their talents.

“Any mackerel, Mr. Sheriff?” said the barrister (who was acting croupier) to the citizen placed at Hull’s right hand.

“Pooh, Dubs!” exclaimed mine host, “why do you ask such a question—eat mackerel!—I don’t suppose Mr. Bucklesbury ever tasted a mackerel in his life. Here’s turbot, Mr. Bucklesbury—fresh from Billingsgate this morning—Sunday makes no difference with me—I happen to know the most eminent salesman in the market—Bless your soul, he wouldn’t mind sending a boat express to Torbay for a turbot for *me*.”

“Very fine fish indeed,” said, or rather snorted, Bucklesbury.

“Fine,” exclaimed Hull, “nothing at all, my

dear Sir, to what you have at home—eh—I happen to know—there's no man so particular about his fish as you."

"I like it good when I has it," said Bucklesbury; "is there any lobster sauce?"

"Any!" cried Hull, "my dear friend, there are loads of lobsters—thousands—here, you stupid dog—bring some of those sauce tureens to the sheriff."

The conversation at dinner consisted of little more than a repetition of pressings and refusings, and of challenges to drink wine, and observations upon the wine itself. A very fine haunch of venison made its appearance, which somewhat varied the letter, but not the spirit of the discussion; and to hear Mr. Bucklesbury lecture upon fat and lean, the alderman's walk, and currant jelly,) of which, Hull told us, he had millions of pots, and which Bucklesbury was good enough to inform us, went remarkably well with venison,) illustrated as it was with plates, was enough to make any human being as sick as I certainly thought he must himself have

been long before the close of the entertainment.

It was evident, however, that good digestion waited upon appetite, for after his display of activity as regarded the first course, he performed upon a couple of young ducks in a manner which astonished one half of the company, and disgusted the other. "'S'bud!" said the barrister, "a joke's a joke, but this it too much for friendship—an Eton man—eh—civic—what, eh—" all of which running commentary upon the exhibition of the overgrown citizen, kept Hull, who worshipped the Josh, in a state of fever, by no means rendered intermittent by the imitative powers of my friend the actor, who contrived to swell himself like the frog in the fable, and make himself, thin as he was, the very *fac simile* of the mountainous *millionnaire*.

The dessert—after Hull's description of his fruit—was rather a disappointment: the currants had been gathered, the gooseberries stolen, but there were still "*bussbels*" of apples; and the cellar afforded the juice of the grape in its best

possible state; "hundreds" of bottles graced the board, and every disposition to do ample justice to the profusion of our Amphytrion was manifested by his much delighted guests.

The conversation, so long as "reason maintained her seat," was not much more cordial or vivacious, than it had been earlier in the day. Bucklesbury, the *fêted* of our host, was marked by his visitors as the general butt for their shafts, and the wags were most assuredly united, if in nothing else, in the determination to make him ridiculous. To say truth, he gave them but little trouble; but as the wine mounted, the feelings and passions of the party began to develope themselves; the claret acted as varnish to the picture, and brought out all the lights and shadows of their minds; and what struck me particularly, who drank less, or at least less rapidly than my companions, was, that exactly in proportion as their animosity towards each other became more evident, they affected an additional degree of candour, prefacing the bitterest and most sarcastic observations, with

declarations such as “Not that *I* think so, it is only what I hear!”—“Of course I don’t allude to any particular person!”—“I hope nobody will think!” and so on, until from “gentle converse and communings sweet,” the dinner-room assumed the tone and character of a miniature Babel, a fact of which the neighbourhood appeared to be pretty well aware, since groupings of Mitchamites were seen looking and listening over the neat trimmed hedge, which, in the earnestness of argument, every body had forgotten was all that separated us from the public road. As the clergyman had left the party some time before it had arrived at its acmé, we had few scruples about our audience, and Hull, who was quite a triton amongst the minnows of Mitcham, “liked it.”—“Pooh, pooh, my dear friend, let them hear—they may go a long way before they hear so many clever people talking again! My dear Sir, Mr. Bucklesbury, it is not worth my while, to have dull people here—I value wit—I ap-

preciate it—I have lived all my life with wits——”

“——From Rochester downwards,” said the barrister.

“Thank my stars,” said Bucklesbury, “I know very little about wits.”

“Yet,” said Duberly, “you seem always to have your wits about you.”

“Dubs, Dubs,” said Hull, checking the vivacity of the lawyer—perfectly aware that his opulent and corpulent friend had as faint a notion of taking as of making a joke.

“Yes Sir,” said the citizen, “the man must get up very early who hopes to master me. I’ve raised myself to my present high station—(Duberly’s mouth curled, and the actor made a face)—by plain, plodding industry,—many a little makes a mickle, and you may rely upon it there are more fortunes saved than gained.”

“But how the deuce,” said Duberly, “is a man to begin saving, who has nothing to begin with?”

“Industry will always furnish the means, and economy will do the rest,” said Bucklesbury. “Sir, I walked my way up to London with half-a-crown in my pocket, and I am now worth a couple of hundred thousand pounds, and no man can say black’s the white of my eye.—I had a friend who left our native town the same day as I did—he travelled by the wagon——”

“—— Like the Thespians,” said Duberly.

“Be quiet, Dubs,” said Hull, giving the bar-rister a wink, by way of caution not to irritate the actor.

“And what became of *him*?” said Duberly.

“Him,” exclaimed Hull! “pooh, pooh, Dubs, you know him very well—so do you, Tim—I think we all happen to know him—an excellent man too—and an alderman—eh—Mr. Sheriff—eh—I’m right—eh, you dog?”

“You are quite right,” said the sheriff.

“Oh!” said Duberly, “our friend Firkins?”

“To be sure,” said Hull.

“ Yes, but he’s pretty well to do, as a body may say,” said the barrister.

“ Say !” exclaimed Hull—“ what do you mean by ‘ a body may say ?’—he is a beggar—that’s the consequence of his extravagance.”

“ A beggar !” said Duberly, “ why, he is an alderman.”

“ What has that to do with it ?” said Hull.

“ I can’t exactly say as he is a beggar,” said the sheriff, “ he has made his hundred thousand snug, I’ll be sworn.”

“ Well, but my dear friend,” said Hull, “ that’s being a beggar compared with *you*. My dear Sir, I don’t mean to say he begs about the streets—I mean to say he has not much more than a hundred thousand pounds.”

“ Riches, like everything else,” said the poet, who was somewhat tired of the subject, and rather anxious to talk, “ are comparative—I confess that the value of wealth appears to me to be exactly proportioned to the extent of benefits it enables one to confer——”

“Whose benefit is fixed?” said the actor, who hated sentimentality—stretching his head and his hand forward, after the fashion of Sylvester Daggerwood.

“I don’t mean theatrical benefits, Sir,” said the poet, “I mean those solid benefits which exalted benevolence confers on suffering genius—there *are* Mæcenases even in these days.”

“That there is,” said the sheriff, “asses of all sorts, I can be sworn, but none much greater than what are called geniusses.”

“Or Jenny asses,” interrupted Duberly.

“Dubs, Dubs,” said Hull, “pray don’t interrupt the sheriff.”

“I never knew but one genius in my life,” said Bucklesbury; “and a queer genius he was; he belonged to the town I came from; he used to write verses, and play the fiddle, and sing the drollest songs I ever heard: he *was* a genius and a poet—and he was hanged for sheep-stealing afterwards.”

“Clever fellow that,” said Hull, “I happened to know him—Jem Fulcher—pooh! pooh!

—I've got some of his poetry now in my library—extraordinary character—Tim knew him—eh, did not you, Tim?"

"Knew him! to be sure I did!" said the actor—"I gave an imitation of him after his death—very effective—capital hit—"

"You came in second," said Duberly—"the hangman had taken him off first."

"I have often," said the newspaper editor—who had hitherto said nothing—"considered rendering the crime of sheep-stealing a capital offence, somewhat a stretch of severity."

"Good!" interrupted Duberly—"a very serious stretch too—"

"I am not jesting, Sir," said the editor—"a person in my station, appointed—I perhaps ought to say, self-appointed—censor of public morals, and arbiter of public opinion, feels himself bound to consider maturely and gravely every subject by which the great mass of the people are likely to be more or less affected."

"S'bud," said the barrister, "but the great

mass of the people are not likely to turn sheep-stealers; so perhaps you might spare yourself the pain of undertaking so grave a task upon this particular subject."

"I have had a respect for sheep-stealers, dead or alive," said the poet—the sheriff here drew his chair at least three feet from the inspired bard, who was evidently beginning an oration—"ever since the days of Jason; the—"

"Well," said Bucklesbury, "I cannot agree with you there, Sir."

"I speak of the Argonauts," continued the poet.

"Ah, Sir," said Bucklesbury, "I don't mean to say a word against the family of the Arbuthnots. But I lived in the country as a boy, and I cannot justify to myself sheep-stealing in any shape whatsoever."

The expression of despair which the countenance of the poet exhibited was admirably imitated by his opposite neighbour of the "sock and buskin;" and Duberly, who could no longer

maintain his equivocal gravity, burst into an immoderate fit of laughter.

“Sir,” continued the poet, who was very drunk, and getting rather angry, “trace the career of Jason from the moment he left the dragon—”

“Oh, Sir,” interrupted the sheriff, “if your friend goes to the Dragon, I don’t say anything about it—I always use the Swan.”

“Pray, Sir,” said the actor, with a look of imperturbable gravity, “how do you use a swan?”

“Like a goose,” said Duberly, “I suppose.”

“Mr. Hull,” said the sheriff, who did not understand the turn of the conversation, and did not know whether to be angry or pleased, “have you got any coffee for us?”

“Coffee!” said Hull, blushing blue with exultation up to the roots of his hair—“my dear friend, I have three thousand weight of coffee in the house—to be sure there is coffee—and, eh—something after—*chasse*!—I happen to know—splendid dogs you in the city—but I

think I have some Maraschino that never was equalled."

"Have him out," said the barrister.

"Pooh, pooh! my dear Dubs," said Hull, "you have had him out, as you call it, often enough—you and Tim there have drank enough of it to know its quality."

"How, Sir," said the newspaper editor, "is the importation of those liqueurs managed?—isn't there something like a case to be made out against the government for permitting the introduction of foreign spirits?"

"Yes," said Duberly, "a liqueur-case."

"I am not joking," Mr. Duberly, said the editor, with a gravity more than proportioned to the occasion, "I speak, Sir, for information—I act not for myself but the world at large;—men who devote themselves to the service of their country, as I do, do so because they hope it will be profitable ——"

"—— To themselves," interrupted Duberly.

"Dubs, Dubs," said Hull, raising his glass to his eye, and frowning as severely as the

kind, good-natured expression of his countenance would permit him, "you let nobody speak but yourself."

"I beg your pardon," said Dubs, sipping his wine with a provoking coolness, which seemed to indicate a determination to go on for some time, "everybody speaks except myself—I only observe."

"I remain firm," said the editor, "to my question."

"I can't answer it," said the sheriff—"for I am not in that line—I know nothing of the spirit business—but I'll be hanged, as far as taste goes, if I don't think good cherry-bounce flogs all the foreign trash in the world."

"You are joking," Mr. Bucklesbury, said Hull—who, whenever anybody candidly spoke in approbation of something of a secondary nature, according to price, fancied he was quizzing him—for Hull, with all his good nature, was tenderly susceptible of being made ridiculous.

"Not I," said the sheriff; "I have often

said to Mrs. B. when we have been dining out—and when in course one always eats and drinks a considerable sight more than one does at home—that I, for one, prefer rum shrub or cherry brandy to all the garuses, and mallyskins, and curasores in the world. However, here, I suppose, you are too fine to have such a thing as cherry bounce?”

“Bounce!” exclaimed Hull, “cherry bounce, my dear friend!—there’s Dubs can tell you—I have gallons of it—make it by hogsheads—I have seven hundred pints of it in the next room.”

Upon saying which, he rang the bell, and ordered the servant—first giving him a key and a caution—to bring forth sundry bottles of the boasted beverage—for let it always be remembered, that Hull’s cases of what might be thought bounce—were all as genuine as this of the cherry bounce—he *had* all the things he talked of, but his magnificence in the way of provision was what one certainly was

not prepared for; and therefore until a certain number of cherry brandy bottles had been produced by way of ratification, it seemed almost impossible to believe the extent of his preparations for conviviality.

Just as we were going to coffee, Hull gave a sort of supplicatory, hinting look to the actor, indicating a desire that he would sing a song—which, since it grew very near to Monday, and the clergyman had long before departed, seemed not very sinful. Of course, he had a headach and a cold, and “never did,” and so on;—however, at last he complied, and gave us one of the most entertaining descriptions of a fair, or a fight, or a race—I now forget which—I ever heard in my life, interspersed with sundry imitations of men, women, and children, not to speak of animals, ornithological and mammalian, the effect of which was wound up to a screaming power of laughter, by his introducing the most perfect imitation of the sheriff himself, who about two minutes after

the exhibition began to be beyond measure comical, had dropped his dewlap on his frill, and fallen fast asleep.

Duberly was very much inclined to blacken the sheriff's face with burnt cork, after the fashion of my friend Daly at Richmond. But Hull, who was the very pink, I might say the crimson, of propriety, would not hear of such a thing; and accordingly we waited until the actor, less scrupulous than Dubs, prepared *secundum artem*, a pellet of bread, which well and properly directed against the left eye of Mr. Bucklesbury, caused him to awake from his slumbers, which he did, grunting out, as he raised his head from his waistcoat, clapping his hand on the table, "Bravo! very good!—thank you—very good indeed!"

Up-stairs we went—the sheriff, of course, taking precedence—and there we had our coffee, our chasse, and a little tranquillity; and during this pause, the sheriff, next whom I was placed, began to talk to me. He had heard that I was neither poet, dramatist, editor, painter, nor

player—in short, that I had no intellectual qualities by which I could possibly earn a shilling; but that, on the contrary, I had an income derivable from property which became hereditarily mine, he therefore felt a becoming respect for me; besides, I had never attempted a joke, indeed scarcely had spoken, and I therefore imagine I came up to what, in his fat mind, was a “quiet, gentlemanly man:” he patronized, he fostered me, and I was grateful; and after having looked at me with his fishy eyes for a minute or two, he asked me, with a gravity which I confess was more than adequate to the occasion, “whether I had ever eaten marrow pudding.”

I was somewhat astounded, but I was quite sure it meant something kind, and would lead to something else, so I answered, as indeed I could not fail to do, if truth were to be my guide, that I had not, nor could I imagine how such a composition could be prepared.

“Dine with me to-morrow at the Old Bailey,” said the sheriff.

I said I was very much obliged, but——

“But me no buts,” said the sheriff, “except a butt of sherry—I say, that’s a joke, isn’t it—don’t say nothing to them as is here—but you come to the Sessions’ House to-morrow about four—it’s the last day—we shall dine at six—Common Sergeant dines at three—Recorder goes down to try, and I shall be glad of your company. Sentences and all that—fine sight—shews what I call humane natur—eh—come—ask for Mr. Sheriff Bucklesbury,—the divil himself can’t prevent you coming in—you understand—mum—not a word—I don’t half like these chaps—that editor, and the poet, I don’t understand ’em—and the actor is a deuced sight too funny for me—but—you’ll excuse me—I like *you*, and I say so—I never makes two words of a straw,—you come—hear the sentences, and eat marrow pudding—and don’t say a word to nobody about it.”

The combination was curious, “to hear sentences and eat marrow pudding;” to me it was indeed a treat; I had an anxious time to

pass until I could hear from Daly, and was justified, as I felt, in diverting my thoughts from the one object, thinking of which could do me no good. I felt flattered too that this great civic authority should have selected me for his particular notice and civility, and besides, I had never seen a criminal court; my experience had been limited to occasional visits on the bench at Bow-street to my worthy friend, whose advice I had slighted, and whose tutelage I had spurned; and altogether it was new, it was something to excite, and to those who recollect what a man of twenty-one is when he is in love, it must be quite clear that excitement, *oustre* the one subject, is indeed rarely to be produced: I therefore agreed to accept the invitation of Mr. Sheriff Bucklesbury, who squeezed my hand, in confirmation of the engagement, in a manner which I have never forgotten. If it were possible to imagine a pair of walnut-crackers made to the same size as that of his Worship's thumb and fingers, I am quite sure their pressure would be a trifle

compared to the grip which I received from my new and extensive friend—I was certain it was done in kindness, but at least a week elapsed before I recovered from the effects of it.

Our *tête-à-tête* was interrupted by the facetious Duberly, who believing that the sheriff was a saint, asked him whether he had any objection to a rubber; before his answer was given, Hull, who watched his worship with an almost Koo-too-ing kindness, came up, and drawing off the barrister, said to him, “Dubs, Dubs, don’t be childish—no cards here on a Sunday.”

“No,” said Duberly, “I am sure we shall have none—for you have none in the house.”

“None!” exclaimed Hull, as usual—“no cards—come, come, Tim, you know better than that—I have got two hundred and fifty packs in this very room!”

A sort of doubtful murmur ran through the party, and the poet said something of “speaking by the card,” when Hull, getting rather angry at

being doubted, proceeded to unlock a closet in the room, and the moment the door was opened at least twenty packs of entirely new cards tumbled out upon the floor; the astonishment was general.

“My dear friend,” said Hull, “you ought to know me better—I never say what isn’t true—I bought these cards two years ago—best cards you ever played with—I never buy inferior articles—got them in a lump—two hundred and fifty packs—told you so—you may count ’em, Dubs—I see you laughing, Tim—you may laugh—count ’em as you would benefit tickets—eh—Tim—pooh, pooh—don’t tell me.”

Whether we did or did not play cards, I really do not now recollect—I remember laughing until I almost cried at some delightful imitations of the actor. We had anchovy toasts and broiled bones, and all the incentives to dissipation, in which we speedily engaged; punch, and all other destructive and delightful drinks, were introduced; the actor became more and more

agreeable, for he was not only the most agreeable of actors, but the most intellectual of all comedians I ever met with; the editor seemed pacified; Dubs was delightful; and the poet concluded the sports of the evening by pulling off his wig, and throwing it at the inimitable favorite of the Theatre. Then all became noise, confusion, mirth and mystification; and when I opened my eyes in the morning, I found myself as thirsty as a crocodile, with a tremendous headache, and pains in all my joints, the sure result of excess committed in my early life.

When I woke I could not for some time recollect where I was, or where I had dined. I could by no means remember how I got to the bed in which I found myself—it was the scene of St. James's Street acted over again, only there had been no gambling, and there were no visible results. I began to consider whether I had said or done anything either particularly ridiculous or offensive; but vain were my efforts at reflection, until the chambermaid coming into the room, at once, by

an association not to be questioned, convinced me that when I came to the inn from Hull's, the night before, I had

“ Fancied she was a goddess,
Who thought me a fool ;”

and oh, how abashed, and dissatisfied does a fellow feel, when he awakes, in his sober senses, to a faint recollection of the absurdities he has committed while degraded and debased by wine, or what the very genteel may think even worse, punch,—and I too—the devoted to Emma.—I never shall forget the feverish, heated, mawkish, wretched state in which I was; however it seemed an understood thing that I was to appear at breakfast, and (for I recollected my engagement) subsequently dine at the Old Bailey to eat marrow pudding, by invitation from one of the sheriffs of London and Middlesex.

There is no meal so odious as breakfast, in company. I had been excellent friends with all the mad devils of the preceding night, but when I came, sick and uncomfortable, into the

breakfast room, I had to begin it all again, to re-commence my acquaintance, and to hear, by way of comfort, innumerable allusions to what I had said and done, in the latter part of the preceding evening, of which I was myself perfectly unconscious; and then the wretched effort at eating, the tasteless tea, the dreadful egg—the pithy fowl—the briny ham—I was near dying of it, and sorely repented that I had so far invaded Hull's most unquestionable hospitality as to remain for the night at Mitcham.

Hull, however, was off to business early—his gig and horse were at the door by ten, and he and Duberly dashed away, the one to the city, the other to the Temple; the poet lodged near at hand, and the editor walked off to town, intending as he said to loiter about the neighbourhood of Lower Tooting, for the purpose of collecting some information upon the actual state of the population of the agricultural districts; the actor was not up, and did not come down to breakfast—he saw no fun in early hours, and therefore him I did not

meet, but else by eleven o'clock we were all on the wing, and I left the cottage impressed with the kindness and hospitality of my new old friend Hull, who had completely vindicated himself from what I really did, before I had witnessed the proofs of his veracity, think was a little in the line of our venerable friend the Baron Munchausen. Having taken my departure, I drove to town, in order, if possible, by some means to refresh and re-invigorate myself sufficiently to appear before the Judge and Jury, at the hour mentioned by my worshipful friend, Mr. Sheriff Bucklesbury.

It may seem singular—even extraordinary—having in my earlier days, as I have already said, frequently visited my worthy friend the magistrate at Bow Street; and later in my career attended the Courts in Westminster Hall, that I had never been in a court of criminal justice; and as I have also said—perhaps superfluously—there is something extremely embarrassing in the anticipation of entering upon an entirely new scene of action

in society. My directions from my new and important friend the sheriff, were, however, plain and explicit; and accordingly, at a little before three, I presented myself at a door under the colonnade at the back of the Sessions House, and was speedily ushered on to the bench, where I had no sooner taken my seat, than with a feeling hardly explicable, but which I positively declare originated in diffidence, I fancied myself the object of general attention; the fact being that no human creature in the Court (which was crowded to excess) was conscious whether I had come into it or not.

My friend Bucklesbury, who was seated in full costume at the left hand of the semicircular tribune, in a box of his own, his wand of office erect at his side, and a bouquet upon the desk before him, beckoned me in a kind and condescending manner to approximate; and I accordingly shifted my position so as to come more immediately under his wing, or rather nearly over his head, in which position I much rejoiced, as he was kind enough to enlighten me

upon many points with respect to proceedings in criminal law with which I was before by no means familiar.

As I entered the Court, a case of some importance had just terminated, and the judge just concluded his summing up, when the clerk of the arraigns, put the customary question to the jury, "How say ye, gentlemen—is the prisoner at the bar guilty or not guilty?" Upon which the jurymen laid their heads together, and I heard something in a whisper from their foreman, who immediately pronounced the agreeable verdict, "not guilty." The prisoner bowed gracefully—he was a pick-pocket—and retired.

The prompt decision of the jury convinced me that it must have been a clear case; and I rejoiced at the departure of the now exonerated sufferer.

"That's a reg'lar rascal," said the sheriff to me in a whisper; "never was such a case heard on, to be sure—seventeen watches, thirty-two pocket handkerchiefs, four pair of specta-

cles, and five snuff-boxes, all found upon his person !”

“ Yet,” said I, “ the evidence could not have been very strong against him—the jury acquitted him after a minute’s consultation.”

“ Evidence, Mr. Gurney !” said the sheriff, “ how little do you know of the Old Bailey !—why if these London juries were to wait to consider evidence, we never should get through the business—the way we do here, is to make a zig-zag of it.”

I did not exactly comprehend the term as it was now applied, although Daly had often used it in my society with reference to a pin and a card universally employed at the interesting game of *rouge et noir* ; and I therefore made no scruple of expressing my ignorance.

“ Don’t you understand, Sir ?” said the sheriff —“ why the next prisoner will be found guilty—the last was acquitted—the one after the next will be acquitted too—it comes alternate like—save half—convict half—that’s what we call a zig-zag ; and taking the haggregate, it comes

to the same pint, and I think justice is done as fair here as in any court in Christendom."

This explanation rendered the next prisoner who made his appearance, an object of considerable interest to me. He was a little dirty boy, who stood charged with having stolen a pound of bacon and a peg-top from a boy somewhat his junior. The young prosecutor produced a witness, who, as far as appearances went, might without any great injustice have taken the place of the prisoner, and who gave his evidence with considerable fluency and flippancy. His manner attracted the notice of one of the leading barristers of the Court, Mr. Flappertrap, who in cross examining him, inquired whether he knew the nature of an oath.

"Yes, I does," said the boy.

"Explain it," said Flappertrap.

"You may be d——d," replied the lad, "that's a hoath, arn't it?"

"What does he say?" said the Judge—who, as I about this period discovered, was as deaf as a post.

“ He says, ‘ you may be d——d,’ my Lord,” said Flappertrap, who appeared particularly glad of an opportunity to borrow a phrase, which he might use for the occasion.

“ What does he mean by that ?” said the Judge.

“ That is the way, my Lord, in which he exhibits his knowledge of the nature of an oath.”

“ Pah ! pah !” said the Judge—“ Boy, d’ye hear me ?”

“ Yes,” said the boy, “ I hears.”

“ Have you ever been to school ?”

“ Yes,” said the boy, “ in St. Giles’s parish for three years.”

“ Do you know your catechism ?”

The boy muttered something which was not audible to the Court generally, and was utterly lost upon the Judge personally.

“ What does he say ?” said his Lordship.

“ Speak up, Sir,” said Mr. Flappertrap.

The boy muttered again, looking down and seeming embarrassed.

“Speak louder, Sir,” said another barrister, whose name I did not know, but who was remarkable for a most unequivocal obliquity of vision—“speak to his Lordship—look at him—look as *I* do, Sir.”

“I can’t,” said the boy, “you squints!”

A laugh followed this bit of *naïveté*, which greatly abashed the counsellor, and somewhat puzzled the Judge.

“What does he say?” said his Lordship.

“He says he knows his catechism, my Lord.”

“Oh—does not know his catechism—why then what—”

“*Does* know, my Lord,” whispered the Lord Mayor, who was in the chair.

“Oh—ah—*does* know—I know—here, boy,” said his Lordship, “you know your catechism, do you?”

“Yes,” replied he sullenly.

“We’ll see, then—what is your name?” said his lordship.

“My name,” said the intelligent lad—“what, in the catechism?”

“ Yes, what is your name?”

“ M. or N. as the case may be,” said the boy.

“ Go down, go down,” said the Judge, angrily, and down he went.

“ Gentlemen of the jury,” said his lordship, “ this case will require very little of your attention—the only evidence against the prisoner at the bar which goes to fasten the crime upon him, is that which has been offered by the last witness, who evidently is ignorant of the nature and obligation of an oath. With respect to the pig’s toes which the prisoner stands charged with stealing—”

“ A peg-top, my Lord !” said Flappertrap, standing up, turning round, and speaking over the bench into the Judge’s ears.

“ Peg-top,” said his Lordship—“ oh—ah—I see—very bad pen—it looks in my notes like pig’s toes. Well—peg-top—of the peg-top which it is alleged he took from the prosecutor, there has not been one syllable mentioned by the prosecutor himself; nor do I see that

the charge of taking the bacon is by any means proved. There is no point for me to direct your attention to, and you will say whether the prisoner at the bar is guilty or not; and a very trumpery case it is altogether, that I must admit."

His Lordship ceased, and the Jury again laid their heads together; again the foreman gave the little "hem" of conscious readiness for decision; again did the clerk of the arraigns ask the important question, "How say ye, gentlemen, is the prisoner at the bar guilty or not guilty?" "Guilty," said the foreman to the clerk of the arraigns; and "I told you so," said the sheriff to me.

The next case was a short one. The prisoner a woman, the evidence clear and straightforward; but no great interest was excited, because it was known that the case, for the trial of which in point of fact the learned Judge had, for particular reasons, given his attendance, and which accounted for his Lordship's presence at the close of the session, was very

speedily to come on. This extraordinary combination of circumstances afforded me the most favourable opportunity of seeing all the sights of this half awful, half amusing scene, even to the discharge of the grand Jury, who had been specially kept together for the purpose of finding or ignoring the bill preferred against the eminent culprit, who was evidently the great attraction of the day—having found which, they had but three more to decide upon.

It was in the middle of the defence of the female prisoner, now “*coram nobis*,” and just as she was making a beautiful but useless appeal to the “gentlemen of the jury,” that a bustle in the Court announced some coming event.

“I am,” said the weeping prisoner, “an orphan—I lost my mother while I was yet a child—my father married again, and I was driven from what had been before a happy home—I have only to pray—”

Bang went a door—the scuffle of feet were heard—down went some benches—“Make way

—make way!” cried some of the officers. “Stand back, Sir, stand back—the gentlemen of the Grand Jury are coming into Court.” To what the moaning prisoner at the bar might have limited her supplications, I never had an opportunity of ascertaining, for the noise I have mentioned was succeeded by the appearance of eighteen or nineteen men, dressed up in something like the shabbiest dominos I had seen at Lady Wolverhampton’s masquerade, trimmed with very dirty fur—the leader, or foreman, carrying in his hand three bits of parchment. As these gentlemen advanced to a space reserved for them in the centre of the Court, the Judge kept exchanging bows with them until they had all reached their destination—the foreman then delivered to the Clerk of Arraignment the three bits of parchment, who, putting his glasses on his nose, read—James Hickson, larceny—not found—John Hogg, felony—true bill.—Mary Anne Hodges, felony—not found. The clerk then informed his Lordship, partly by words, and partly by signs, the result of

the deliberations of the Grand Jury, and the fact that there were no more bills to send before them. Having thus far proceeded, that officer inquired if the gentlemen of the Grand Jury had any presentment to make ; whereupon, the foreman, one of the largest, and dirtiest-looking persons imaginable, but whose countenance was indicative of love of power and command, and who appeared, at the moment he prepared himself to unburthen his great soul of a grievance, to feel as if the whole world were a football, made for him to play with.

“ My Lord,” said he, drawing himself up into an attitude, “ I am sure I need not, at this time of day, enter into any discussion with your Lordship on the vast importance of the rights and privileges of Englishmen—of the original establishment of the trial by Jury in this country. It would be worse than idle to occupy your valuable time and that of this Court, by dilating upon the merits of our constitution—the chiefest of which has, I may say—been always—and I will say—wisely, considerately and

prudently held to be that peculiar mode of administering justice between man and man. But, my Lord, if in civil cases the deliberation and decision of a Jury are considered adequate safeguards to the rights and property of the people, the law, still more careful of their lives and liberties, has interposed in criminal cases another and a higher tribunal, in the nature of a Grand Jury."

Hereabouts the Judge having bowed his head more graciously, omitted to raise it again, having dropped into a sound slumber.

"That tribunal of mediation in the first instance, is full of importance; and whatever subsequent proceedings may be taken in a case, I do say, for myself, and my fellows, that the decision upon *ex-parte* evidence requires more circumspection, more care, and more consideration than a verdict delivered after a case has been argued, and after witnesses have been heard on both sides.

"If, my Lord, your Lordship concedes this point, I will merely say, generally, that when

the mind is occupied by any important object, more especially in matters of jurisprudence, it is absolutely necessary that nothing, if possible, should occur to irritate or exacerbate the feelings—all should be calm, and at rest.”

Several people turned their eyes towards his Lordship, and some smiled.

“No incidental annoyance should be permitted to interpose itself; nothing which could divert the Judge from the point to which his intellectual faculties ought to be directed, and which, my Lord, under suitable circumstances, they would, as they should, naturally converge. But, my Lord, we are finite beings—creatures of habit—subject to all the weaknesses of our nature, and liable to be acted upon by impulses almost unaccountable to ourselves. For myself, and my fellows, I may, perhaps, hope for a favourable interpretation of our intentions, and a lenient judgment of our conduct. We have, my Lord, struggled hard to do our duty, and I hope we have done it serviceably and effectually—conscientiously and faithfully, I am sure we have.

But, my Lord, we do think it necessary to call your Lordship's most serious attention to a fact which is embodied in the presentment I hold in my hand. It is one which occurs to us to be of paramount importance, as far as the tempering of justice with mercy is involved: we have suffered grievously from the existence of the evil to which we point; and although at this time of the year its effects are of course not so heavily felt as in the winter season, we have considered it a duty we owe to this Court, to our fellow countrymen, and we may say, to every man intimately or remotely connected with the administration of criminal justice, spread as they may be over the whole surface of the globe, to state that the chimney in the Grand Jury room smokes so much and so continually, that it is impossible to endure its effects calmly or patiently; and we therefore think it right to bring the matter thus formally before your Lordship, and to desire that measures may be taken to abate a nuisance which, by its effects, is calculated to thwart, impede, and even distort the course of justice,

and produce evils, the magnitude of which it is scarcely possible to imagine, and certainly not to express."

A buz of approbation from the gentlemen of the Grand Jury, who had been undergoing the process of smoke-drying for several days, created a stir in the Court, in the midst of which the learned Judge awoke; and the Lord Mayor having whispered into his Lordship's wig, his Lordship bowed, and the clerk took the parchment.

"Mr. Foreman and gentlemen of the Grand Jury," said his Lordship, "I am happy to say that your labours for the present are concluded, there are no more bills for your consideration; your presentment shall be attended to, and I have to acknowledge your great zeal and attention, and to give you thanks for your services—Gentlemen, you are now discharged."

The bows, and scufflings, and cries of "Make way there for the gentlemen of the Grand Jury, who are coming out of court" were resumed, and the orator and his peers re-

tired, leaving the poor girl at the bar, wondering what had happened, and what could be the reason that the worshipful community with the cat-skin tippets should have interposed themselves in the middle of her pathetic defence, in order to discuss the irritating characteristics of a smoky chimney.

I admit that the pompous oratory of the foreman, the "*mons parturiens*"—a splendid exhibition, and the "*ridiculus mus*," which eventually presented itself, were to me treats of no common order, and I regretted that Daly was not with me to participate with me in devouring the grave absurdities which we should have had before us.

The trial of the girl was concluded, and I had no doubt as to her fate, now that I became acquainted with the principle—she was acquitted, and never shall I forget the effect which this result of her trial produced upon her manners and features. The moment my friend Zig-zag had pronounced the words, "not guilty," the pathetic expression which had charac-

terized her countenance turned into the most humorous, and having winked her eye at the learned Judge, who, poor man, had summed up decidedly against her, she proceeded to place her two hands extended in a right line from the tip of her nose, in the direction of his lordship's seat, after the fashion of what is called "taking a double sight," and then, making a noise which, if not indescribable by imitation, is certainly irreducible to writing, something between that which a hackney-coachman utters to encourage his tired horses, and that which a duck makes when it sees either a ditch or a drake in dry weather, she turned herself suddenly round with the least graceful piroüette I ever saw, leaving one of the hands which she had previously elevated for observation the last part of her person visible.

A short case of pot-stealing followed—the prisoner was found guilty in ten minutes; and then came *the* case: it was a curious and intricate one, and I felt quite assured, when I saw the prisoner, a genteel looking young man,

take his place under the inverted mirror, contrived with an almost diabolical ingenuity, so as to refract and reflect the light upon his face from the huge window at his back; I said to myself, having got both hardened and hungry during my short probation in Court, "We shall not dine at six to day."

It might, perhaps, injure the feelings of the individual himself, or, if he be dead, those of his friends and relations to detail the particular case, the more especially as nothing could be clearer than that the crime laid to his charge was amply and satisfactorily—to everybody except himself—proved and substantiated.

Just as the last witness for the defence was under cross-examination, I saw one of the Lord Mayor's servants put his powdered head in at a little hole, and whisper something to the Ordinary of Newgate, a remarkably pious-looking man, in full canonicals, with a bag wig, which, to use Foote's phraseology, speaking of Dr. Simony, (by whom, as of course everybody knows, he meant the unfortunate Dr. Dodd,) "looked as

white as a curd, and as close as a cauliflower.” It struck me that either the pretty wanton who had just been acquitted, desired some serious conversation with the clergyman, or that the last convicted pot-stealer felt some qualms of conscience, and had sent for spiritual assistance—but no—my friend Mr. Sheriff Bucklesbury relieved my mind from any such apprehensions, by inviting me to a whisper, with an expression of countenance which convinced me that it was nothing of so serious a character, which had suddenly summoned the reverend divine from the Court.

“Good news!” said the Sheriff; “land is in sight.”

“What?” said I, not exactly “catching the idea.”

“Dinner is not far distant,” said the Sheriff, “the Ordinary has been sent for to dress the salad.”

Well, thought I, that ever a man so dressed, and so addressed, as the reverend Divine opposite, should quit the seat of justice tempered

with mercy, to mix oil and vinegar in a salad bowl does seem strange. It was evident to *me*, from the manner in which my friend spoke of the chaplain's secular vocations, that his respect for the table was infinitely greater than that which he entertained for the cloth, and never from that day have I seen painted over suburban inns, "an Ordinary on Sundays at two o'clock," without thinking of the reverend functionary so styled in the Old Bailey, and the probable duties he would be called upon to perform.

The evidence having terminated, and the clock pointing to fifteen minutes after six, his lordship began summing up. I have already mentioned that his lordship was deaf, and the strange blunders which I noticed in his early charges will perhaps serve to inform the reader of these papers, whoever he may be, that his Lordship's hand-writing was utterly unintelligible, even to himself; indeed so completely illegible were his notes, that the only resource his Lordship had, if ever they were

called for upon motions for new trials—which perhaps I need not here add, was in his Lordship's case by no means an unfrequent occurrence—was to send them to be printed—printers being proverbially the best decypherers in the world.

His Lordship's charge—barring the inevitable blunders and hesitations, rendered absolutely necessary by this almost hopeless illegibility—was exceedingly minute and elaborated. He recapitulated the evidence of the three first witnesses verbatim, and continued thus of the fourth:—

“ Now, gentlemen of the jury, here is Amos Hardy—Handy—no, not Handy—Harding—Amos Harding tells you, that on Tuesday—no, not Tuesday—I see—Friday, the 14th—that is, the 24th—he was going along Liverpool—no—Liquorpond Street—near Guy's Island—Guy's—no—Gray's Inn Lane—yes—going along Liquorpond Street, Gray's Inn Lane—at about eight o'clock in the morning—and saw the fire break out of Mr. Stephenson's

windows. This, gentlemen of the jury, is a very remarkable fact—and in connexion with some other circumstances to which we shall presently come, is quite worthy of your particular attention—you perceive that he swears to eight o'clock in the morning.”

“ Evening, my Lord,” said Mr. Flappertrap, standing up and whispering his Lordship audibly.

“ Evening, is it?” said his Lordship—“ aye, so it is—evening—no matter—he swears to the time at which he saw the fire break out—and hence will naturally arise in your minds a chain of circumstances which it will be my duty to endeavour to unravel. In the first place—”

Hereabouts one of the servants of the Court put his head in at one of the doors at the back of the bench, and whispered the Lord Mayor much after the manner in which Mr. Flappertrap had just before whispered the Judge. His Lordship immediately pulled out his watch—then looked at the clock—and then wrote a few words upon a slip of paper, and

laid that slip of paper upon his Lordship's notes. The Judge took up the memorandum, and tore it in pieces—as I thought indig-
nantly—

“ You know what that means?” said my friend, the sheriff.

“ No,” said I.

“ Dinner's waiting,” replied my friend—an announcement which startled me, as it seemed impossible but that it would be kept waiting for some time. This little scene, however, was followed by the arrival of the Recorder, who after bowing to the Lord Mayor, took his seat on the bench.

“ I told you so,” said the sheriff, “ Mr. Recorder is come to try the remaining cases—” A cry of “ Silence—pray, silence,” indicated that Mr. Sheriff Bucklesbury and I were speaking somewhat too loudly.

“ The circumstances to which I allude,” continued his Lordship, after he had torn up the note, “ are in fact so clearly detailed in the evidence you have heard, that to men of intel-

ligence and experience, like those I am now addressing, any attempt at explanation on my part, would be superfluous. The case appears a very clear one—you have to decide upon the value of the evidence, and return your verdict accordingly, giving the prisoner the benefit of any doubts you may entertain on the question.”

Never was I more surprised than at finding the promised explanations and comparisons of facts and testimony so suddenly cut short, after the manner of “the story of the bear and fiddle,” and I could not help, while the clerk of the arraigns was putting his accustomed question to the jury, noticing the circumstance to my worshipful friend.

“To be sure,” said the sheriff, “don’t you see—the time is up—he smells the marrow puddings.”

The jury, emulating the expedition of the Judge, in one minute, according to the zig-zag system, acquitted the prisoner; whereupon, his Lordship rising to depart, addressed that individual in words to this effect:—

“ Prisoner at the bar, you have been tried by an able, patient, and conscientious jury of your countrymen, who, convinced like myself of the enormity of your crime, and of the wicked intentions by which you were actuated in its commission, have returned the only verdict which they could justly and honestly return—they have well discharged their duty. And although it is not *my* province in this place to pronounce the awful sentence of the law upon you, I shall take care—”

Here Mr. Flappertrap whispered his Lordship that the jury had acquitted the prisoner.

“ By and bye, Sir,” said his Lordship, angry at being interrupted—“ I shall take care, young man, that an example shall be made in your person, of the—”

The Lord Mayor here ventured to suggest that the “ young man” was found *not* guilty.

“ Very well, my Lord—presently, presently,” said his Lordship—“ even-handedness of justice; and that an enormous offender of your class may not be suffered to escape the just

vengeance of the laws which he has outraged."

Here Mr. Flappertrap whipped a bit of paper over the desk of the bench, into the very place which the announcement of dinner had so recently occupied. His Lordship looked at it, and exclaimed, unconsciously—" Oh ! ah !—umph !" and then continued—" It is true that upon the present occasion the mercy and forbearance of the jury have been exercised in a signal manner ; and I trust their benevolence and indulgence will not be thrown away upon you. I maintain my own opinion still—yet they have decided, and I have only to receive that decision—you are discharged, Sir, and may go about your business ; but I can tell you this, young man, you have had a very narrow escape indeed."

There was not a man in Court who did not tacitly admit the truth and justice of at least the concluding passage of his Lordship's address to the acquitted prisoner ; nor was that individual himself the least astonished of his

Lordship's auditors. The incident, however, was worthy of its place in the day's proceedings, as producing a climax to the judicial operations of the learned Lord, and leaving upon the minds of all his Majesty's liege subjects then and there present, a conviction that however classical it may be to picture Justice blind, it is not, as a matter of convenience and utility, at all desirable that she should also be deaf.

The signal for our departure having been given, I proceeded with my friend the sheriff to ascend the stairs which led to the dining-room. When we reached the apartment, which was at the top of the building, we found several persons already assembled, and in conversation with the ordinary, who were come to partake of the dinner, but whose taste did not lead them to listen to the trials in Court; four or five barristers soon joined the group, and in a few minutes we sat down to the repast, which was more plentiful than splendid, and in which the much vaunted marrow puddings displayed themselves conspicuously. The Lord Mayor took the head

of the table, and the Chaplain placed himself at the foot of it. I sat between my friend and patron the sheriff and Mr. Flappertrap, whose proceedings below stairs had attracted a very considerable share of my attention. I found him pleasant and full of anecdote—the Chaplain cut jokes innumerable—the Lord Mayor was absolutely droll—and the venerable Judge himself laughed at some anecdotes which were told him, till tears ran down his venerable cheeks.

Strange contrast!—five minutes before, these people had been below dispensing the law to the people, deciding the fates and fortunes of their fellow-men, raising or destroying the hopes of the doubting trembling friends and relatives of those arraigned before them; and now—their spirits having risen progressively with themselves to the top of the same building—there they were, eating, drinking, and laughing, as if the dinner, of which they were partaking, was, in point of fact, the only cause or reason for their assembling.

The feast went on—some of the barristers

departed for the Court—the Chaplain “passed the wine,” and the conversation became general as the party diminished, when one of the servants announced to his reverence that “the yeoman of the halter” had just arrived from Wales. The style and title of this officer was new to me; and when a stout beetle-browed man entered the room, and made a low bow, I inquired of my friend the sheriff what part in the play he performed?

“That’s Mr. Scraggs,” said the sheriff.

“Yes,” said I—“but what is yeoman of the halter?”

“A joke,” said the sheriff—“what you and the unlearned, call Jack Ketch!”

I felt a mingled sensation of surprise, and I must admit horror, at being in the same room with this most dreadful functionary. That feeling wore off when I found the sheriff, the under-sheriff, and even the Lord Mayor himself recognise him. The Chaplain, who was always destined to participate with him in the performance of the last scene upon the scaf-

fold, filled a glass of wine and handed it to him.

“Well, Mr. Yeoman,” said his reverence; “you have been out of town some time?”

“Five weeks altogether, Doctor,” said Scraggs; “I vent down, you know, into Vales, for the first job; but there was a respite which kept me back a fortnight.”

“It is a curious fact,” said the Chaplain, addressing himself to me, “but in the case to which the yeoman refers, he was obliged to go down to Carmarthen to hang a horse-stealer, because not a native of the principality could be found to perform that duty on a Welshman.”

“Quite true, Sir,” said Scraggs; “howsoever, I had two executions besides that, durin’ the time I was out; one at Hereford, and another at Gloucester, they both vent off uncommon vell: it has been beautiful weather the whole time, and I don’t think I ever spent so pleasant a five weeks in all my life.”

The yeoman having finished his wine, put his glass upon a side table, made a bow to the

company, and retired, about which time arrived the Recorder, and two or three barristers; this seemed to be the signal for a general move, and I suggested to my friend, the Sheriff, a return to the Court: this, however, was a vain proposition, for it was almost immediately announced that the last trial was on, and that the Common Sergeant had relieved the learned Recorder, who was to arrange the various sentences of the prisoners, which yet remained undecided, after which ceremony, we should all go into Court and hear the sentences pronounced.

It was by a peculiarly happy concatenation of circumstances that I was enabled to see all these features of civic justice combined. The Judge, however, as soon as the Recorder made his appearance, rose from table—we all did the same—they remained in conversation for some time, when his Lordship bowed to the company, and retired, accompanied by the Lord Mayor and one or two of the guests. The Recorder then assumed the presidential chair, and we began the afternoon afresh. The Chaplain pushed

round the wine—the butler placed glasses before the Recorder, together with pens and ink, and a long book-like paper, which I found to be the calendar. At his right hand sat one of the city pleaders, and on his left, the clerk of arraigns, who had joined our party at the same period with his Lordship.

The learned Judge having placed his spectacles on his nose, began to peruse the names and crimes which this book of fate contained, and to apportion to each culprit tried that day, such quantum of punishment as he might seem to deserve.

“No. 174,” read his Lordship. “Martha Hickman—stealing pewter pots—what shall we say, Mr. Drawley? Gentlemen, I have the pleasure to drink all your very good healths.—Why, Mr. Butler ——”

“My Lord.”

“What wine is this?”

“The same wine your Lordship always drinks,” said Mr. Butler; for every office in the City, which is not dignified with a lordly

title, is designated at once by its name, to which is prefixed Mister—for instance, the Lord Mayor's mace-bearer, and sword-bearer, are uniformly called, as indeed they call each other, 'Mr. Mace,' and 'Mr. Sword,'—so Mr. Butler.

"Not a bit of it, Sir," said his Lordship; "this is sour, bad, wishy washy stuff—not fit to be drunk."

"I am very sorry, my Lord——"

"Sorry!" said his Lordship; "what signifies being sorry, Sir—you should take care in the first instance to have proper wine put down."

"I will change it, my Lord, I——"

"Change it!" said the Recorder; "to be sure, Sir—change it directly! It won't do, Sir. This sort of thing has happened before—get some other wine, Sir, directly!"

This command was delivered in a tone of thunder, preceded by a flash of lightning from the eye of the irritated Judge, who then fell to work upon the calendar.

"Martha Hickman, stealing three pewter pots—seven years' transportation."

“Robert Hayes, stealing three fowls, one duck, and a doe rabbit—fourteen years, I think, eh, Mr. Drawley—yes—fourteen years—have you marked him?”

“Yes, my Lord.”

“Harriet Richards, stealing four yards of linen—Richards? was not that the woman with the cap and ribbons?”

“Yes, my Lord.”

“That was a hanging cap,” said his Lordship; “hardened woman—two years’ imprisonment.”

“Walter Cutts, stealing two loaves—seven years for him, I think. Did you ever taste such stuff as that wine, Mr. Ordinary?”

“My Lord.”

“You have not been drinking any of that bottle, have you?”

“No, my Lord,” said the Chaplain; “it is corked.”

“It never should have been uncorked here, Mr. Ordinary,” said the Judge; “it is an absolute insult.—Well—Stephen Robinson, for stealing two pewter pots—upon my honour it is

enough to bring on a cholera morbus—Robinson, seven years' transportation. Vinegar would be just as palatable. Rachel Marsh, fourteen years—abominable woman. Simon Warner, pair of boots, umph—oh, I recollect that case—transportation for life. Well, Sir ——”

“Will your Lordship please to try this,” said Mr. Butler, proffering a new bottle. His Lordship, still muttering indignation, filled his glass, and after smelling its *bouquet*, and looking at its brightness, swallowed the contents. “Ah,” said his Lordship, “this is something like wine—why did not you give us this at first, Mr. Butler? Fill my glass again—hand it round—you’ll find that, Mr. Ordinary, quite another sort of thing—excellent, excellent wine indeed. Well, let us finish our business. Robert Holland, stealing fourteen gold watches, thirty-four gold chains, six time-keepers, and sundry loose diamonds, oh—in a dwelling-house—well, let’s say three months for him—capital wine, isn’t it, Mr. Clerk—capital. Roger Perkins, three mares and a foal—six weeks’ imprisonment.

Anne Griffiths, administering poison to her mother, aunt, and two sisters—poor girl—case of mistake, eh—pass that bottle, Mr. Ordinary—what shall we say—childish carelessness—one month. Simmons, cow—oh—fine one shilling and discharge—that's the last—the last.”

Never was I more convinced of a man's wisdom than I was at this moment of that of the foreman of the Grand Jury, who had expatiated so elaborately on the effect of irritating circumstances, acting upon the mind while it is employed in the dispensation of justice. As a sequel to the decisions of the Jury, it appeared to me that the apportionment of punishment was incomparable; however, for the scene that was immediately to follow, I own I was not prepared.

Just as the Judge had concluded the “catalogue of crime,” it was announced that the last trial was over, and that the Court was waiting for his Lordship to pronounce sentence upon the convicted prisoners. The company rose and followed his Lordship down stairs to

the Court—I resumed my seat upon the bench, wholly unconscious of the nature of the spectacle which was so soon to absorb my attention.

The whole place had assumed a different aspect since I had left it—it was now night, and the lights were burning dimly in their sockets—a profound silence reigned, and every eye was directed towards the door by which the prisoners, classified before their arrival, were to enter the dock. After the lapse of some minutes of suspense, a motley crowd pressed forward towards the bar—sobs and groans were heard—and faint cries, which evidently proceeded from those relations of the culprits, to whom, fallen and debased as they were, they were yet devoted in affection.

“Who are these?” said I to Bucklesbury.

“These are the capital convicts—you’ll hear in a moment,” was the reply.

And I did hear—one of the most awful addresses ever made to guilty creatures, delivered by the Judge, who but a few moments before had seemed to me to be of the world, worldly. It

appeared as if he had become suddenly inspired with an almost unearthly dignity and power. His voice deep and impressive, his language forcible and eloquent; the purport of his dread appeal, and its termination, never will be effaced from my memory. And when, in conclusion, amidst their wailings and supplications, he passed the awful sentence of the law upon his fellow-creatures, and in dooming them to death, prayed for mercy on their souls, I fell back in a state of insensibility, wholly overcome by my feelings, much, as I subsequently perceived, to the amusement of one of the under-sheriffs, (a small attorney,) who, at a later period of the evening, whether in order to enjoy a joke at my expense, or to affect the hospitable, I do not know, told me that he supposed, as I had heard the sentences, I might like to witness the execution of those who were to die, in which case, he should be glad to see me whenever the day was fixed; adding, with an expression of peculiar *bonhomie*, “we hang at eight, and breakfast at nine.”

There can be no question that a constant familiarization with such scenes blunts the feelings, if it does not harden the heart. The butcher's wife, who bribed her baby to take physic by promising, if it were a good child, that it should stick a lamb the next morning, saw nothing revolting in the idea of killing that, by the death of which, she lived. To shew to what an extent experience in horrors deprives them of their effect, I may mention the following fact, related to me many years after this period, by a friend.

When the traitor Thistlewood and his murderous gang of accomplices were to be executed before Newgate, my friend, whose taste lay that way, secured a window to witness the catastrophe. The sentence included decapitation after death; and when the executioner commenced his work by cutting off the head of Thistlewood, and holding it up to the people as the head of a traitor, a shudder of horror thrilled through the crowd. The second similar operation upon the next culprit produced a si-

milar effect, but in a slighter degree; and so completely did that feeling wear off as the performance of duty proceeded, that when, in the executioner lifting the head of the seventh traitor, as the preceding six had been lifted to the public gaze, happened to let it fall, cries of "Ah, clumsy"—"halloo butter fingers," were heard from various quarters of the assembly.

The awful denunciation of offended justice from the lips of the Judge, certainly did not produce upon the *habitués* the effect it had upon me. To the passing of the minor sentences I listened with composure, and I confess that when I heard Robert Hayes sentenced to fourteen years' transportation for stealing two ducks and a doe rabbit, and Anne Griffiths saddled with a month's imprisonment for endeavouring to poison all her existing relatives, I could not help thinking of the butler's corked bottle and the foreman's smoky chimney.

When the Court rose, I shook hands with

my new friend the sheriff; and having taken a glass of hot brandy and water with the Ordinary, which he recommended as a correction for the indisposition produced by my sensibility, I quitted the Sessions House, amused and amazed by what I had seen and heard; and most of all astonished that I had actually existed eight hours without once thinking of my beloved Emma¹!

¹ It is but just to observe, that this picture of the Old Bailey, sketched by my late friend, and not intended for the public eye, although essentially correct, bears evident marks of caricature. Mr. Gurney was at the time a young man, and ready enough to catch the ludicrous wherever it was to be found. Certainly, at the present time, the Court in question presents a very different appearance, and possesses a very different character.—ED.

CHAPTER II.

My anxiety about Daly, and his proceedings in my behalf, began greatly to increase. He had been now gone a week, and I had heard nothing, although according to his own vivid anticipations I was to be actually affianced to Emma in three days after his arrival at Tenby; — at least, I might have been apprized of his arrival, and of the posture of affairs at the opening of the campaign. I went to his lodgings, but Redmond had heard no more than I. I returned thence, therefore, as ignorant and dispirited as when I went; and as usual wiled away half an hour at the door of Mrs. Fletcher Green's carriage, which I met in Piccadilly, and which she caused to be drawn up

close to the *trottoir*, in order to accomplish our little *tête-à-tête*. She kindly renewed her invitation, but I was living in a sort of perpetual worry, and felt unable to mix in society any longer. I excused myself, therefore, by a plea of going into the country, which I palliated with a hope that I should have the pleasure of seeing her on my return, and a promise that her's should be the first door I knocked at upon my arrival in London.

When I parted from her, I felt that it was quite impossible any longer to mistake the nature of the sentiment she entertained towards me; and this very conviction increased my difficulties and embarrassments. Nobody who has not been placed in circumstances similar to those in which I then found myself—but I suppose almost everybody has—can at all understand the sort of misty maze which life appeared at that period. The sameness and tastelessness of everything disconnected with the one great object of my life—were, I must own, mixed with self-reproach to a very considerable extent, for

having committed my affairs to the hands of so volatile a minister as Daly.

It was not until the morning of the eighth day from his departure that I received a letter from my ambassador, not from Tenby, but from Malvern Wells, whither it appeared he had followed my charming dulcinea. However, the shortest way of connecting my adventures and proceedings with a history of my own time, will be to insert his various communications upon this interesting subject in their proper places. No. 1. of the Correspondence immediately follows:—

Malvern.

MY DEAR GURNEY,

By the date of this, you will see that I have had a sharp chase after your fair friends. My proceedings since we parted would make a valuable addition to the classical stories of Mr. Lane, of the Minerva Press, Leadenhall Street—they have been varied and curious—but I fear to you, who have but one object in view, will not be particularly interesting.

I slept at Oxford the night I left town, supped with some old friends at the Mitre, sallied forth and met the Vice-Chancellor returning from supper over Magdalen Bridge,—we who were all somewhat elevated, thought it quite right to elevate *him*, and accordingly we hoisted him on our shoulders, and having crowned him with a lamp cover, carried him home to Baliol, at the gate of which we deposited him, having luckily met with interruption neither from Proctor nor bull dog. I ought perhaps to premise, that having arrived at about five, I went to wine at Brasenose, with a most admirable person, called in these parts, Sober Tom; and while in his rooms, a fancy came into my head, that the blowing up of Cain and Abel, who stand cheek by jowl, in the middle of the quadrangle, would be excellent fun. Accordingly, having the *quoi faire* in my coat pocket, as soon as it grew dark, and before we adjourned to our episcopal inn, I deposited one of my exploding grenades in a luckily discovered crack in the pedestal, gave him three quarters of a hour's

fuse, and just as we were clear of the rose, bang he went, and the unnatural brothers were regularly floored upon the grass-plot, much to the edification of four unhappy devils who were locked up in a room over the gateway fagging for a fellowship.

To me these freaks are admirable jests ; for, not belonging to the University, I care nothing for taking the active direction of exploits for the performance of which I am not amenable to the heads or tails here, while my intimacy with some score of the hardiest young fellows in Oxford, gives me, at least, as far as mischief goes, an *esprit du corps* highly to be commended.

Do not for a moment imagine, that these parenthetical pranks were permitted for a moment to interfere with your interests. A man must sleep somewhere ; and after Dow Wolf's exhausting receiver of Friday, I assure you I felt a halt at the end of the first fifty miles absolutely necessary to my comfort, although I could not endure the idea of being a night in

Oxford without exercising my native ingenuity during the course of the evening.

Our supper was excellent—nine of us—all as sober as judges when we broke up; which circumstance, however, did not hinder me from performing one feat with unqualified dexterity. An elderly gentleman, in a shovel hat, with a fat wife and a fair daughter, was toddling up by easy stages from Wales for advice from the London doctors, and was lodged in the room on the first floor immediately under us. The worthy shovel sent at least a dozen messages up to implore and entreat we would make less noise—an imprudence on his part not to be altogether overlooked. About eleven he went to bed in dismay, in the back room, with the bed-room within it, in which the bright-eyed damsel of a daughter was herself duly deposited out of harm's way. As we came down from our sitting-room, I heard the invalid shovel snoring a duet with his exemplary and obese partner. Up I ran into the room immediately over his head, and in the twinkling

of an eye turned up three half-tester beds right on end, in which were sleeping two strapping chambermaids and a kitchen wench, and having poised them thus, banged to the bed-room door, which instantly awakened the reversed damsels, who startled at the noise, jumped, as they thought, *up* in their beds, which had precisely the *reverse* effect, namely, that of bringing the three bedsteads simultaneously to the floor, with a noise which would have roused Somnus himself, if he had condescended to take up his lodging under the hospitable roof of our friend Peake.

A dreadful peal of laughter which succeeded the explosion, must at once have satisfied the disturbed travellers whence the uproar proceeded, and of course quieted their apprehensions, that as Macbeth's friend says, "where they lay last night, the chimneys were blown down."

The next day I pursued my journey—rattled through Cheltenham—to me the most odious place in England—what it may be twenty

years hence, I don't pretend to say—now it is a bad edition of Hammersmith—reached Gloucester by half past three, and found myself housed at the Angel at Abergavenny a little before nine, having done my ninety-three miles in eleven hours and a half, which in these parts I call going. Those who live to see steam coaches, and steam boats, and air balloons, in general use, may perhaps sneer at the pace; but as neither you nor I are likely to endure till the age of hot water and hydrogen gas, it is as well to be contented with what we have in the way of speed.

Would that I could have kept up at the same rate; but no—the roads grew bad, the horses worse, and I had a heavy day's work of it to get to Caermarthen by half past one o'clock on Sunday morning. At Caermarthen I resolved to pitch my tent, and roosted, as owls are said to do, in the Ivy Bush. Nothing particular occurred there; and about half past eleven in the day, I proceeded to the pretty little town which we fancied contained your jewel beyond

price. I reached the White Lion, and began my inquiries amidst the ringing of bells, which distracted me, but of which I subsequently found myself the unconscious cause. Remember, I don't mean house-bells, for the White Lion boasts no such luxury—I mean the church-bells, which were set going in their merriest peals to do me honour, for which, in the sequel, I found one pound one shilling set down in the bill under the head of “ringers;” but a little *éclat* is worth paying for, if one have but the money.

Well, my dear friend, having brought you to the White Lion, or rather having brought myself there, I sallied forth in quest of our family—feasted my eyes on the beauties of the place, admired the elegance of Sir William Paxton's baths—detected an old naval friend of mine patiently playing billiards with a very sensible-looking gentleman, at a table which stood on an inclined plane; so that the skill of the game consisted rather in keeping the balls out of the left-hand corner bottom pocket than putting them into any of the others—Began my in-

quiries with *him*—"place full—many families there—who were the leaders?" He was as innocent as a sheet of white paper—knew nothing except a report of Milford Haven being about to be adopted by government as a naval station. I pitied and left him, and proceeded to the apology for a library, which I entered. In a subscription-book lying on the counter, I read over a list of the fashionables who graced the place—Mr. and Mrs. and three Misses Evans, Mr. Hugh Jones, Mr. David Jones, and Miss Jones, Mr. Mrs. and Master and Miss Morgan, Captain and Mrs. Rice, Mr. and Mrs. Leek, and Miss Leek, Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths, Dr. Roderick Jones, Colonel and Mrs. Williams, Mr. Jenkins Jones, of Cwmdblrowmgytty, and family ; Mrs. Price Price Morgan Rees of Mmllabyth, and a vast many other similar names filled the pages—but no Haineses. I thought this odd, and therefore ventured to push my inquiries to the librarian. He put his finger, first on his forehead, then on his nose, and then on his lip ; and, turning to a very pretty rosy-cheeked girl,

said, "Wern't those people's name Haines who had Evan Thomas's house?" "Indeed to God it was," said the girl. "That's it, Sir," said the librarian, "'deed is it; they have been gone away these three weeks, Sir—a lady and a daughter."

"Exactly so," said I;—"now can you tell me whither they went?"

"That I can't indeed," said the librarian; "but if you will let me send over to Evan Thomas, I have no doubt he will know."

My permission was soon granted, and the information soon gained—the Haineses had gone to Malvern; where, for all Mr. Evan Thomas knew, they were still sojourning. Of course, I made every preparation for pursuing them to that lovely spot in the morning; taking, however, the opportunity of a delightful evening to abstract the linchpins from all the bathing-machines which were ranged under the cliff; for which little mental and bodily exertion, I was amply repaid before my departure by beholding the actual overthrow of three of the

said machines during their progress to the sea, and the consequent ejection of three fair tenants in a state of inconceivable distress; not to speak of two others of the vehicles, which when I first opened my window at the White Lion, were lying on their sides on the beach, looking like a brace of dead elephants.

Refreshed by breakfast and the success of my exploit, I started from Tenby; but as I met with no adventure of any importance, and more especially as I am quite convinced that you are more anxious to hear of my arrival at Malvern than any thing else, I shall say not a word as to my journey thither—or rather, hither—which I safely concluded about five o'clock in the afternoon of my second day.

I was driven to the Well House, where I determined to fix my head-quarters at all events; and in less than ten minutes had ascertained that Mrs. Haines and her fair daughter were actually inmates of that delightful tenement. Nothing could so charmingly facilitate plans like those which I had laid—in the morn-

ings, noons, breakfasts, afternoons, and evenings, we should be associated—domesticated together at breakfasts, luncheons, dinners, and suppers, in walks and in drives, in loungings and in lollings, in talkings and singings; in short, in every amusement, pursuit, or recreation, occupiers of the same tenement, members of the same family.

It must be evident, that nothing can so entirely conduce to the accomplishment of my project, as the fortunate circumstance of their having settled here. Except at Harrowgate, I know of no other watering-place where the whole population are cooped up together; all the difficulties of introduction are overcome, and you will, I am sure, be delighted to hear that, although I lose no time in reporting progress, having been here not more than twelve hours, I am already on speaking terms with the Haineses, *mère et fille*.

At the table, where all the company meet at meals, the promotion is progressive—the last comer sits lowest, and thus upon a Tontine

principle, the longest survivor gets the highest place—a shaky admiral and his rigid wife are the monarchs at present; opposite to them, and of the same standing, are a deaf Lord and his pretty niece; and next to the admiral on the right hand side, come Mrs. Haines and her daughter. The company below the salt are chiefly old and invalids; but there are some gay rollicking folks who appear to annoy the sicklies by their liveliness and laughter, the old hands seeming to think, because Malvern air and Malvern water have been recommended for “*their*” complaints, that Malvern Well House is to be converted into a sort of hospital. Here is one sweet girl under the *tutelage* of her aunt. They are more recent arrivals, and are therefore nearer me at table; in the evening of yesterday we got very sociable, and she sang that exquisite song of Moore’s, “Dearest love, I’ll not forget thee,” like a syren—Aunty looked suspicious at *me*—why, I cannot understand—I am all innocence, if people would but trust me.

I carefully watched your Emma—she ap-

pears pale, and I think out of spirits—I must approach with care and caution—nothing ruins an affair like flurrying a gentle creature such as she seems to be—a sudden surprise sometimes excites them into an exclamation;—one scream would upset all my operations, and perhaps produce my expulsion from the community; for Mrs. Steer, mine hostess, is a very dragon in the way of prudence and propriety. There is a Captain Meriden, who seems to talk to Emma more than anybody else, but she is shy and retiring in her manner, and from the ease with which she converses with, evidently cares nothing about him.

Major M'Guffin, of the grenadier school, is, however, more attentive to your future mother-in-law; the style and manner of their living—the gay servants—the smart carriage—the glossy horses—the well-dressed maid—all bespeak the snug and comfortable; and although as the gallant gentleman has not, in all probability, had the advantages which we have derived from Doctors' Commons, he may imagine that

he might console the widow for the loss of the late Mr. Haines, and at the same time render himself, as the husband of Mrs. M'Guffin, extremely comfortable for the rest of his days—rely upon it he will be disappointed. Another week will see me on terms of the most entire confidence with the ladies, and I will stake my existence that before a fortnight is over, our affair will be concluded.

We have some extraordinary characters here, but I know too well the nature of your complaint to fancy that I could interest or even divert you for a moment by a description of them. It is curious to see, for English people, how sociable they get in this Well House. It is the constant association, the necessity, as it were, of making society, that produces this—the elders play whist in a room on one side the hall, while the juniors play the piano-forte and the fool on the other : I ought, however, just to tell you, that, on the night of my arrival, I discovered that the bed-room candles belonging to all the guests are placed upon a table behind

a screen in one corner of the saloon, so that each person after supper—for as we dine at three, that conciliating meal is considered absolutely essential to our existence—each person can depart at pleasure and all—

“ Without hurry, or bustle, or care.”

the moment I made this acquisition of knowledge as to the localities, I took the precaution of dipping the ends of every candle—muttons, I give you my honour—into a basin of water, which I found in their company on the table, and which seemed to have been placed there on purpose to tempt me; the result was, on the departure of the first squad of tabbies—for like fruit on a tree, in a place like this, the most matured drop off first—there arose such a spitting and sputtering behind the screen, that one would have fancied a magnificent display of fireworks had been going on—or rather off—in the distance, during which experiment, accompanied by the lamentations of the venerable sisterhood, Major M‘Guffin kept his great green

eyes immoveably fixed upon me,—whether he only suspected me as the author of the mischief, or favoured by his unusual height, had looked over the screen, and seen me at work, I could not then make out, nor have I since discovered; nevertheless and notwithstanding, I flatter myself I am upon the whole, popular.

As for Emma, your description did not do her half justice—I think her perfection—her eyes are all eloquence, and the gracefulness of her manner is incomparable. Mrs. H. is not quite what I expected, I dare say of a very domestic turn of mind, but somehow—not that I flinch from my bargain if it can in any way contribute to the success of *our* scheme. I have no time for more; assure yourself of a despatch the moment I have made any effective advance; in the mean time, keep up your spirits, and believe me, as I truly am,

Your's most faithfully,

R. F. DALY.

The receipt of this communication gave me

great contentment, inasmuch as it not only dissipated all the apprehensions I had formed of my friend's possible neglect of his mission in the pursuit of some strange vagary of his own, but because it afforded me intelligence of negatively satisfactory character, in telling me, that Emma, if torn from *me* by her anxious parent, was at least free from the persecutions of any other regularly received suitor; and as I never entirely believed in the seriousness of Daly's intentions with regard to Mrs. Haines, it mattered little to me whether Major M'Guffin's attentions were in earnest or not, or indeed, whether they might or might not prove acceptable to her.

Somewhat composed therefore, by this communication, I accepted an invitation to dine at Lady Wolverhampton's to meet Mrs. Fletcher Green and her young companion, whom I now discovered to be her sister, Miss Carter—Catherine Carter, and several extremely agreeable persons. It was rather a blue party, but Mrs. Fletcher Green contrived to enliven it,

and with her honied words overcame the flavour of the prussic acid, which otherwise would have predominated; some people sang, some played cards, some recited poetry in one room, and others diverted themselves at the more interesting game of *loto*, at which I must confess the noble hostess seemed not only very much amused, but particularly successful; indeed, Mrs. Fletcher Green appeared to have such confidence in her ladyship's luck that she neither would join the party herself, nor suffer her sister nor me, (for whom her manifestations of kindness were unequivocal,) to participate in its alluring pleasures.

“*Ogni medaglia ha il suo reverso*,” says the Italian proverb,—I was this evening destined to appreciate its truth, and I am even now almost ashamed to admit how deeply I felt, that the next morning was fixed for Mrs. Fletcher Green's departure from town on a visit to a Lord and Lady somebody, whose name I have forgotten, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Windsor, and where she was to stay for a week or eight days, during which period Ascot

racers, I believe, were to occur. I am sorry to say that whatever compliments my taste might deserve for my admiration of this fascinating woman, my stability of purpose, and constancy of mind, were not to be highly lauded. However, the chances were, that upon her return to town, I should be irrevocably parted from her, as far as any tenderer feeling than that of friendship was concerned, although I did not despair by the access of fortune which would accompany my union with Emma, to establish her and myself in such a position in society as would render us the worthy entertainers of my agreeable friend and her sister, under what I hoped would be always found, our hospitable roof.

Well, away went the evening—and away went Mrs. Fletcher Green and her sister, and at length away went I, not knowing what the next day would produce, and living in a state of nervousness entirely indescribable.

Upon my arrival at my lodgings, I found an invitation written in the most delicate hand, and in minute characters, from my friend Hull,

to dine with the Worshipful Company of Toothpick Makers, who were to have their annual feast at the Crown and Sceptre at Greenwich, to which he, being, I suppose one of the worshipful fraternity, had the privilege of taking a friend : I was puzzled whether to struggle against a desire to mix in society, with the peculiarities of which I could never, without the aid of my civic and mercantile friend, become acquainted, or to give up the conflict, and abandon myself to the solitude which I was sure would be most congenial to my feelings—I thought with Thompson,

“ I want to be alone, to find some shade,
Some solitary gloom : there to shake off
These harsh tumultuous cares that vex my life,
This sick ambition on itself recoiling :
And there to listen to the gentle voice,
The sigh of Peace—something—I know not what
That whispers transport to my heart.”

Yet after all, why should I brood and nestle over my sorrow—I hesitated—but then, I had been interested and excited at the Old Bailey, why should I not seek solace from the Crown and Sceptre at Greenwich. I debated the “to be or not to be,” for half an hour, and at

last resolved to see, what I had never seen, a public dinner, and which I little doubted had its attractions, and its oddities. I accordingly wrote an answer to my friend Hull, accepting his kind bidding, and promising, as he desired, to be rigidly punctual to six o'clock.

Of all things in the world a "daylight dinner" is the most detestable of all operations. I remember being so struck with its peculiar *désagréments*, that although my heart was then little attuned to the gay school of poetry, I could not help venting my spleen, and the detestation which I felt for the blaze of sunlight glaring into the Greenwich tavern windows, made more brilliant by reflection from the water, in some lines, the entire copy of which, I have lost, but of which the following are fragments.

When Summer's smiles rejoice the plains,
And deck the vale with flow'rs ;
And blushing nymphs, and gentle swains,
With love beguile the hours :
Oh ! then conceive the ills that mock
The well-dressed London sinner,
Invited just at seven o'clock
To join a "daylight dinner."

The sun, no trees the eye to shade,
 Glares full into the windows,
 And scorches widow, wife, and maid,
 Just as it does the Hindoos ;
 One's shoes look brown, one's black looks grey,
 One's legs if thin, look thinner,
 There's nothing equals, in its way,
 A London daylight dinner.

The cloth seems blue, the plate's like lead,
 The faded carpet dirty.
 Grey hairs peep out from each dark head,
 And twenty looks like thirty.
 You sit beside an heiress gay,
 And do your best to win her,
 But oh !—what can one do or say,
 If 'tis a daylight dinner.

A lovely dame just forty-one,
 At night a charming creature,
 My praise unqualified had won,
 In figure, form and feature.
 That *she* was born, without a doubt,
 Before the days of Jenner,
 By sitting next her, I found out,
 Once at a daylight dinner.

Freckles, and moles, and holes, and spots,
 The envious sun discloses,
 And little bumps, and little dots,
 On chins, and cheeks, and noses.
 Last Monday, Kate, when next me placed,
 (A most determined grinner,)
 Betrayed four teeth of mineral paste,
 Eating a daylight dinner.

* * * * *

How much farther I indulged in this *poetic* strain, or whether I did carry the *joke* any farther, I have now quite forgotten, however, I accepted the invitation, and although I was at the time perfectly innocent of the scale of dignity and antiquity claimed by the 'Tooth-pick Makers' Company, I felt assured that I should add something to the store of knowledge which I had been recently laying in with regard to civic matters. I must honestly confess that I had no cause to repent the decision at which I had arrived.

The day was extremely fine—the windows of the rooms opening to the water, the house smelling of fried fish and mud, and the little boys with naked legs screaming “please to make a scramble,” we, having attained this enviable position, in the building which looked like a race-stand, by threading a labyrinth of the dirtiest alleys, and stable-yards that ever pauper or poney inhabited. It was, however, a joyous scene, and Hull, who was good enough to be my Mentor on the occasion, pooh poohed

the waiters into allowing us to look at the dinner-room all laid out for the company; more than a hundred were expected, partitions had been pulled down, holes cut out here, and props poked in there, to afford the required accommodation; in short, everything gave token of a goodly day.

Hull, who was at home everywhere, and everywhere popular, appeared, as soon as he arrived, to supersede everybody else.

“My dear friend,” said he, “I happen to know these people—the Tooth-pick Makers are one of the most ancient corporations of the city—my dear sir, the Mercers were incorporated in the 17th of Richard the Second—I have a tract that will prove it—1393 they were embodied—I know the Clerk of the Company at this day—so do you—”

“No I do not,” said I.

“Pooh, pooh,” said Hull, “don’t tell *me*—Jemmy Hobbs—everybody knows Jemmy Hobbs—married Miss Ball of Blackheath—splendid fellow, Jemmy. Well! these Mercers are a fine company, so are the Grocers—St.

Anthony is their patron. My dear Sir, I am forced to know all these things. Then there are the Drapers, and the Fishmongers—pooh, pooh—Doctors, and Proctors, and Princes of the Blood, are all fishmongers—Walworth was a fishmonger—eh—my dear friend, you should see their paintings—splendid things—Spiridiona Roma—fish in all seasons:—then there are the Goldsmiths and the Skinners, and the Merchant Tailors—Linen Armourers—eh—queer fellows, some of them, but I do assure you—” (this was said in a whisper,) “you will see some men here to day worth seeing.”

“I suppose” said I, “the Tooth-pick Makers Company was founded by Curius Dentatus—whence comes the French, *cure-dent*.”

“Pooh, pooh,” said Hull, “no such thing—much older than Curius Dentatus—I happen to know—founded in the reign of Edward the Fifth, my dear friend.”

About this period the company began to arrive “thicker and faster,” and certainly I had

never seen any one of them before, which gave, at least, an air of novelty to the scene—generally speaking, they ran fat, and wore white waistcoats, such as that, to which I had likened the bow window of 77, St. James's Street: they looked all very hot, and puffed a good deal:—however they kept coming and coming, until the drawing-room, as a sort of thing like a bad conservatory, well placed to the south-west, was called, was so full that I began to be as hot as my companions. Six o'clock arrived, but no dinner—the master of the house—who, from wearing a similar sort of uniform waistcoat I took to be a Tooth-pick Maker, came in and spoke to some of the fattest persons of the community, evidently saying that the banquet was ready—nevertheless no move was made, because it appeared that Mr. Hicks had not arrived.

“You had better,” said one of the more important persons in the room; “let men be placed ready to see when Mr. Hicks arrives at the end of the lane by the stables.”

“Yes, sir,” was the answer, and from that

time I heard nothing but Hicks, and Mr. Hicks talked of, until I was driven by extreme curiosity to enquire of my omniscient friend Hull, who Mr. Hicks was.

“Hicks !” exclaimed Hull—“why, my dear friend, you know Mr. Hicks—the great Mr. Hicks—everybody knows Hicks.”

“I for one,” said I, “do not—” and it turned out that at the moment I was not likely to be enlightened, for, just as Hull was about to give me an account of this important personage, a hubbub and bustle near the door, which speedily pervaded the whole assembly proclaimed his arrival—in a moment the buz of conversation ceased, a sort of circle was made round Mr. Hicks, and several of the most distinguished members of the community hurried up to take their places near him; Hull dragged me towards this sanctum, this magic ring, and with a look of the greatest importance assured me, that it was right that I should immediately be presented to Mr. Hicks. The presentation accordingly, took place, and no

sooner was it over, than one of the grandees came up to me, and in a confidential whisper, informed me that my place at dinner, was on the left of Mr. Hicks as being a friend of the Master;—I concluded the arrangement was attributable to Hull, who, I found, was to be my neighbour on the left, and although I could have dispensed with the honour of so close an approximation to the hero of the day, I rejoiced mightily that I was placed so near my friend Hull, who would be as useful to me upon such an occasion, as is a catalogue of the pictures at an exhibition any where else.

In a very short time dinner was announced, and Mr. Hicks, having the Master on his right hand, led the way to the large room upstairs, round the whole of which the table ran, exhibiting, as I entered the apartment, a lengthened line of tin covers, looking like a collection of cuirasses, glittered on the board,—the heat was tremendous, and the air redolent of fried flounders. A few minutes sufficed to arrange us, grace was said by the chaplain, and we fell to. As in all similar

cases, the exercise of eating and drinking superseded conversation or remark, and I, who did but little in that way myself, and having therefore an opportunity of seeing the *modus operandi*, at my leisure, became suddenly enlightened as to the extent to which such pleasures may be carried. Of each and every dish, did each and every man partake, from Turtle to White-bait, both inclusive ; my friend Bucklesbury, whom I had a week before considered a prodigy in the way of feeding, sank into insignificance by comparison with the individuals now before and around me ; to the elaborated course of fish, succeeded a host of fowls, cutlets, hashes, stews, and other things of that nature, accompanied by sundry haunches of venison, and succeeded again by ducks innumerable and peas immeasurable. The destruction of all these articles was, however, effected with ease in less than an hour and a half, during which the attentions paid to Mr. Hicks were the most marked and gratifying ; if the sun shone in upon the tip of his nose, the waiters were ordered to pull down the blinds

before him, if the gentlest breeze wantoned about the back of his neck, the master of the house was called to shut the window behind him; for *him* the chairman culled the choicest bits; to *him* the landlord tendered his most particular wines: every eye was fixed on *his* actions, every ear seemed open to *his* words; he had however, as yet spoken little, but had “eaten the more.”

All sublunary pleasures must have an end, so had this dinner, and a call of silence, and the thumping of the president’s hammer upon the table, announced that some professional gentlemen were about to sing *Non nobis Domine*—they began—we all standing up—I with the sun full in my eyes, setting over London in all its glory: the voices harmonized beautifully, but fine and melodious as they were, I felt that the canon or whatever it is called, very much resembled a fire which smouldering and smouldering in the low notes, kept perpetually bursting out in a fresh place, when one fancied it out: as far as the religious feeling of the thing goes,

it was misplaced, and as for its duration, it seemed to me more like three graces than one.

This over, the wine began to pass, and “beards to wag;” Hicks grew condescending, and the day began to mend; the King’s health was given—song God save the king—chorus by the company, all standing—The Queen—The Prince of Wales—then the Duke of York, and the Army—the Duke of Clarence and the Navy—The Memory of Saint Ursula, the mother of all Tooth-pick Makers, with an appropriate glee, received with loud cheers.

The Master then rose and begged to propose a toast—no sooner had he uttered these words, than the whole room rang with applause, the wine-glasses danced hornpipes upon the table to the music of the forks and spoons, and the noise was tremendous—“I see,” continued the worthy President, “that you anticipate my intentions; gentlemen, there could be no doubt upon your minds what the toast would be,” (more cheering); “I will not occupy your time, nor hinder you from the gratification of your feelings upon this

topic by dilating upon the merits of the illustrious individual whose health I am about to propose; whether we regard him in public life, guiding by his zeal and energy the community which he fosters and protects by his influence, or view him in private society, the ornament of the circle of which he is the centre, our gratitude, and admiration are equally excited. Gentlemen, I will not trespass upon your time, or wound, what I know to be the delicacy of his feelings, by recapitulating the deeds which gild his name, and which have, during the last year, added so much to his honour and reputation, and to the welfare and comfort of his colleagues and associates:—I beg to propose the health of Benjamin Spooner Hicks, Esq.—a name dear to every Englishman—with all the honours.”

Then came a storm of applause unparalleled, at least in my experience; a band of music which had hitherto been silent, struck up “See the Conquering Hero comes,” and nine times nine cheers were given in a style the most overwhelming. During this storm of rapture, I

seized the opportunity of once again asking Hull who Hicks was, and what he had done, to deserve and receive all these extraordinary marks of approbation and applause, but all I could extract from my rubicund friend was “pooh, pooh—don’t tell me—you know Hicks—my dear friend, everybody knows Hicks—there isn’t a man better known in the universe.” There was no time amidst the din of glory to assure him once more that I had by no possible accident ever heard his name before, so I resumed my seat as the object of our enthusiasm quitted his, to return thanks—his up-rising was hailed by the company with an almost Persic adoration—silence at length having been obtained, he spake——

“Sir, and Gentlemen,—there are certain periods in our existence which entirely defy description—this, as far as I am concerned is one of them—I have been placed in many trying situations, and I think I may say, without fear of contradiction, I have behaved as became a man, (loud cheers); I am aware that some of

my efforts for the benefit of my fellow-creatures have been crowned with success (hear, hear, hear); and I am thankful to Providence that I am possessed of the means to do good to them as is not so well off as myself, (loud cheers). I say, Sir, it would be the height of baseness for a man who has been born with a silver spoon in his mouth, not now and then to take it out, and feed them as has not been so fortunate (great cheering). My political feelings and principles I need not touch upon (immense cheering); they are known to all the world (tumultuous applause); I shall steadily maintain the course I have heretofore followed, and observe the straight line, neither swerving to the right hand, nor to the left, as little awed by the frown of power, as flattered by its smiles, (hear, hear, hear.)

“Gentlemen, I sincerely thank you for the honour you have done me, and beg to drink all your good healths in return.” The shoutings here were renewed, but to an extent far beyond the former exhibition. Mr. Hicks sat

down, but still the thunder continued; and scarcely had it subsided, even for a moment, when Mr. Hicks, upon his legs again, caused a relapse which nearly drove me mad.

Hicks waved his hand, and it was a calm—you might have heard a pin drop—he had to propose the health of the worshipful chairman the Master of the Tooth-pick Makers' Company.

After expressing in almost the same words that Hicks had just before used, his conviction that this was the "proudest moment of his life," the chairman continued to observe, that if anything could possibly add to the gratification of having his health drunk by such an assembly, it was the fact of its having been proposed by such an individual. He then proceeded to say, that he was quite sure in that society, composed as it was of men of all parties, all professions, and all politics, he need not expatiate upon the merits of the honourable gentleman to whom he had previously alluded—they were known all over the world. *He*, like Hicks, returned the most heartfelt acknowledgments for the

favour he had received at their hands, and sat down amidst very loud acclamations.

Still I was left in ignorance of all the great deeds which “gilt” my friend Hicks’s “humble name;” and I found, being so near him, that it was quite impossible to get enlightenment. At length, however, I was destined to hear something of the character of his achievements; for shortly after the worshipful Master had sat down, and just before the healths of the Wardens of the Tooth-picks, or some such functionaries, were about to be toasted, a tall, thin, pale man—a rare specimen in the museum—rose and said, as nearly as I can recollect, what follows:—

“Sir, I am sure you will forgive me for the intrusion I now venture upon; but I cannot permit this opportunity to pass, without expressing on my own part, and on the behalf of several of my worthy neighbours, a sense of our obligation—and indeed the sense of obligation under which, like us, the rest of civilized Europe are laid by the manly, courageous,

zealous, and indefatigable exertions of the honourable gentleman on the right of the chair, to whom you have so justly referred, (loud cheers). It may, perhaps, be thought superfluous in me to enlarge upon a subject so familiar to your hearts; but I cannot avoid mentioning a trait which at once displays the greatness of that honourable gentleman's mind, the prowess of his courage, and his immutable determination to do justice to all men"—still louder cheers followed this point.

"I think," continued the pale man, "I need not speak more distinctly upon the subject to which I allude." Here shouts rent the room, and the glasses began to dance again. "But lest there should be any gentlemen present, who might by accident be unacquainted with the circumstance to which I refer"—(cries of "no, no! impossible! hear, hear! order, order!") "I say, *if*—for it may be so—if such a thing should be, I think it best at once to explain that the conduct to which I now specifically refer, but which I may truly say is of a

piece with every action of his honoured life, is that which our great benefactor—and friend—if he will allow me so to call him,”—(Hicks nodded, and said “hear!”)—“observed upon the occasion of removing the lamp from the corner of Black Lion Street to the head of Spittle Court.” (Immense cheering.) “Sir, I do not wish to go into the question of the eleven yards of pavement from the Swan Inn to the Boot-maker’s”—roars of laughter burst from part of the company, at the evident severity of this remark upon the conduct of some other eminent individual, murmurs from others, “hear, hear!” from many, and “oh, oh!” from a few! “I strictly confine myself to the lamp; and I do say without fear of contradiction, that the benefit conferred on society by that change, and the manly way in which it was effected, without truckling to the higher powers, or compromising the character and dignity of the Company, has shed immortal lustre upon the name and fame of the honourable gentleman to whom I have alluded. (Immense cheers.) I have to apolo-

gize for this effusion"—("no, no! bravo!") "but it is involuntary. I have for several months laboured under emotions of no ordinary nature; I have now unburthened my mind, and have done my duty to myself, my honourable friend, and my country."

The ogre sat down amidst the loudest possible applause, and more shouts were sent forth in honour of Hicks.

The healths of the Wardens of the Company were then drunk—*they* returned thanks:—then came alternately songs and glees, by the professional gentlemen:—then they drank Mrs. Hicks and family;—and then—for be it observed, the fervour of the applause increased as the night grew older—the uproar was tremendous—nine times nine seemed infinitely too small a complement of cheers to compliment the Hicks's, and I had become dead tired of the whole affair, when Mr. Hicks—the great Mr. Hicks, rose to return thanks for *that* honour. He talked of connubial felicity, and spoke of the peculiar merits and charms of his daughters, with

all the eloquence of a tuft-hunting mother. Having done which, he fell to moralizing upon the lateness of the hour, and the necessity of recollecting that Greenwich was nearly five miles from town; that happy as we were, prudence pointed to a period at which such enchantments should terminate. "Gentlemen," said he, "in conclusion, I have obtained permission to propose one parting bumper. I believe we are all agreed, that the constitution of England is a blessing envied by every country in the world—(loud cheers). We have drank the king, the queen, the royal family, the army, the navy, the ministers, and indeed everything that we could be well supposed to drink constitutionally. Gentlemen, the place in which we are now assembled, suggests to me the best, the most loyal, the most appropriate, and the most constitutional toast possible as a conclusion—I give it you with feelings of mingled loyalty and piety—I propose to you, 'The Crown and Sceptre,' and may they never be separated."

This unqualified piece of nonsense delivered

seriously by Hicks, (rather overcome,) to about fifty or sixty survivors of the original dinner, nearly killed me with laughing—not so the company—at it they went—cheered like mad—up-standing nine times nine—rattle went the forks—jingle and smash went the glasses—and in the midst of the uproar, Hicks rose, the Master did the same, and of course, we followed the example.

Then came all the worry and confusion about carriages—the little alley was crowded with people seeking for conveyances—it had just begun to rain. Hull looked at *me* and inquired what vehicle I had?—I had none—I was annihilated—when, judge my delight and surprise, at finding the illustrious Hicks himself at my side, offering Hull and myself places in his coach. I could scarcely believe it—however, so it was, and an advantage was derivable from it, for which I was scarcely prepared.

“Come down with *me*,” said Hicks, “directly:—this way—they are preparing a deputation to light me through the alley to the

carriage—I want to avoid it—my boy tells me it is all ready—if we can but get round the corner, we shall be off without being observed—they *will* do these things, but *incog.* for me,—I hate state and finery—eh, Mr. Hull?”

“Pooh, pooh!” said Hull, “*you* need no new honours—to be sure—what a day—eh—never was anything so splendid!”

And so Hicks’s boy, or as Hull called him, “b’y,” preceding, we made our escape into the patriot’s carriage; and never did I more rejoice in my life. The quiet of the calm which aeronauts experience when they rise in a few minutes from the tumultuous shoutings of the populace into the dead stillness of the vast expanse above, cannot be more surprising than was the tranquillity of the coach compared with the boisterousness of the company.

Mr. Hicks carried us as far as he could, without inconveniencing himself, and set us down at the corner of a small street in Cheapside—having, just before we parted, mentioned to me that if at any time I should be in need of any

article in the hardware line, I should find everything he had, at wholesale prices and of the very best quality.

Hull and I walked westward, but whether it arose from the length of the way or its width, I cannot exactly state, I was uncommonly tired when I reached home. When I fell asleep, which I did as soon as I got into bed, I dreamed of the extraordinary infatuation which possesses men in all classes of life to believe themselves eminently important, and their affairs seriously interesting to all the rest of the world; and became perfectly satisfied that every sphere and circle of society possesses its Hicks, and that my friend the hardwareman was not one bit a greater fool than his neighbours.

CHAPTER III.

IN medicine, I believe,—for, thanks to a good constitution, I know less than my neighbours of the *arcana*,—the effects of stimulants are generally followed by depression. In love—as I then was—I am quite sure that the system of forcing the spirits, and exciting the mind, was one which proved absolute misery to the patient after the excitement was over; and I candidly confess that I never felt myself so much “down” in my life as I was when I got “up” the morning after the extraordinary development of vanity and ignorance, which I have just recorded.

Lifted but to fall from a greater height, I found myself in a state, I cannot say of desponding, but of aching, sickening anxiety, for a second letter from Daly; but no—the day passed,

and no account of his proceedings arrived. Hull, who seemed sincerely interested about me, and really "happened to know" a great deal more of my affair with Miss Haines than I at first believed it possible he should have found out, called upon me and comforted me, and winked, and tittered, and put his glass to his eye, and his finger to his nose, and pooh, poohed, and did all he could to encourage me—"knew her father"—"excellent man"—"prodigious property:"—all of which I received as it was intended; being at the same time by no means satisfied with the tone of the information which I had from my ambassador at Malvern.

My anxiety was, however, not destined to be relieved until the expiration of five more days, during which period it had reached such a pitch, that I felt very much inclined to put myself into the Worcester mail, and seek an interview with my negociator, making the Hop Poles in that beautiful city my head-quarters. I could not, however, make up my mind: such a step might prove something like the heedless shake which

a child, for whom its elder sister has nearly finished a house of cards, gives to the table whereon it stands, and, by one hasty and incautious movement, levels the delicate fabric to its foundation.

At length, however, Time, in the shape of a general postman,

“ The welcome letter brings :”

and I, in an agony of contending passion, burst the seal. I read as follows,

No. II.

Malvern, Tuesday.

DEAR GURNEY,

THINGS go on swimmingly. I have become universally popular with all the agreeable people here, and the terror and aversion of the superannuated patients of our hospital. Emma is delightful; we sing duets after breakfast—make sketches after luncheon—and take walks after dinner. She is fond of backgammon—we play together—she beats me, and laughs: I

can beat any body else; but somehow her dear little fingers moving amongst the men, and the piquant air with which she throws the dice, confuse me, and I am invariably vanquished. After tea (which the people here drink with as much delight and regularity as if they were so many washerwomen) we dance together; while Major M'Guffin, who seems very much inclined to anticipate me in my pretensions to Mrs. Haines, talks to the not unwilling widow romantically of the pleasures of domestic life.

We had nearly a serious quarrel three days since: the Major thought proper to make me his confidant; and as I was going over to Worcester, was single-minded enough to beg me to undertake a commission for him, which he felt disinclined personally to execute. In order to secure my assistance, he was induced to inform me that, having a desire to look as well and as youthful as possible, he had resolved to thicken his hair, (which has grown extremely thin), by the application of some celebrated vegetable balsam, which, according to the published ac-

counts of it, would produce a luxuriant crop of curls in the course of three applications. “ Now,” says the Major, “ if I go myself with my half-bare pate, the folks in the shop will know that I want the balm, or the balsam, or whatever they call it, for myself, d’ye see, and that I would not in the least like; but *you*, with your scrubbing-brush head, never could be suspected of wanting any such aid—will *you* buy me a bottle?”

I need not tell you how readily I undertook the affair; but little did he guess the real cause of my assiduity upon the occasion. Off I go to Worcester, buy the bottle of miraculous balsam at one shop, and a bottle of strong depilatory, for the instant annihilation of superfluous hair, at another. Into the Poles I go; out with the corks; and having carefully decanted the depilatory into the balsam bottle, seal it up with the most delicate nicety, and return to my anxious friend.

The Major, grateful beyond measure, cons over, with the greatest attention, the directions

for using the much longed-for balm; and, according to the instructions specified, saturates his small crop of hair with the liquor, and ties on his night-cap as tightly as possible, and goes to bed, anxious for the morning, when, like a male Medusa, he might put his head out of the window, and exhibit to his sincere friend and messenger the beautiful result of his experiment.

I knew what must inevitably happen; but even yet scarcely prepared for the entire success of my scheme—I was up early—it is a fashion here to rise soon. I was leaning over the rails in front of the house; M'Guffin's bedroom window was open; but although I saw him not, I thought I heard the thunder of his oaths occasionally rolling about the ceiling of his room; himself still invisible. At length one of the servants came to me, and told me that Major M'Guffin wished to see me up-stairs: he was very unwell, and could not come down to breakfast. I obeyed the summons; and, upon entering the apartment, beheld him in his dressing-gown, sitting before a looking-glass,

his head as clean, and as clear of hair as a nine-pound shot.

“What’s the matter, Major?” said I.

“Matter,” said the Major; “by the powers I’m a ruined man; Samson’s case was nothing to mine; look at my head.”

I did, and did not laugh; on the contrary, I exclaimed, in a tone of horror, “Mercy on us, what have you done with your hair?”

“Hair is it,” cried the Major; “here—look—see;” saying which, he exhibited to my view his night-cap, the interior of which, containing the whole stock of the article which once had decorated his head, looked exactly like an ill-built bird’s-nest. So fatally well had the depilatory done its work, that when in the morning he anxiously removed the cap, away came every vestige of its crinitory covering, and the patient was left in the deplorable state in which I found him.

It would evidently have been vain to attempt to pun him into calmness at the loss of his “hair apparent,” or cajole him into a good tem-

per by alluding to "the hare and many friends," or by speaking of "trifles light as *hair*;" I saw he required as much management as if the operation had been prudentially performed by way of preface to a more serious course of restraint. I therefore expressed grief and surprise at the extraordinary effect produced by the application: but my horror was indescribably great when the gallant officer expressed his irrevocable resolution of immediately putting to death the innocent perfumer of Worcester, who had sold me the article. This expedition, of course, I felt it absolutely necessary to stifle in its birth, and therefore painted in my best style, without giving offence, the ludicrous appearance he would make in Worcester, and the certainty that the wags at the Wells would get hold of the story, and make him uncomfortable, if not ridiculous, by disseminating it in all directions. I advised him, on the contrary, to allow me to send off for an experienced hair-dresser, who would, in the course of four or five hours, come down with an assortment of wigs, from which he might make

a suitable selection in time for dinner; overruling his objections to the sudden display which his new acquisition would make, by remarking, that if the balsam, for which he had sent the preceding day, had adequately fulfilled his expectations, founded upon the pretensions it put forth, he would have been equally surprising in appearance to the eyes of the company.

It seems I had luckily hit upon the true scheme of management. The nervous sensibility of the Major to any thing like ridicule, got the better of his latent feeling of revenge; and I accordingly dispatched one of Steers's men for the perruquier, promising faithfully to keep his secret from our fellow-lodgers, and more especially from Mrs. Haines and Emma.

We are to have a little fete on Thursday; it is Emma's birth-day—I am to be master of the ceremonies. We shall have donkey races, and other rural sports, and fire-works in the evening: the Great Malvern band—banditti—are to be in attendance, and we purpose being uncommonly gay: indeed, Emma does me the honour

to say, that I have worked a glorious revolution in this once dull place. I chiefly effected it by rebelling against the megrims of sundry invalids, who, as I told you in my last, set up their ill health as a plea against our good spirits. Now I had no idea of sick people governing a whole house, and accordingly very soon put them down; and now, poor dears, they have betaken themselves to a parlour on the opposite side of the hall, leaving the long room free for our gambols and gaiety.

I am forced to stop short in the description of our proceedings, for Mrs. Haines tells me Emma is waiting for a walk; so for to-day, adieu. Every thing looks well; and I have little doubt that another week will establish me in the confidence of mother and daughter, and our great *coup* may be made; so keep up your spirits, assure yourself that every thing here looks *couleur de rose*, and that our eventual triumph is secure. We talk of going to Ross for a day or two—*nous verrons*; telling you *that*, puts me in mind of repeating a slight acci-

dental joke, which occurred here the evening before last. I was talking to a vastly pretty little woman, whose face is “a fortune;” (but which always reminds me of the fox-found vizer in the fable), of the refinement which has taken place in conversation and manners since those days in which, we are told, wit and humour so much more abundantly flourished. My pretty doll assented to all my grave remarks upon the interesting topic, and concluded by quoting to me that oft-repeated couplet:—

“ Immodest words admit of no defence ;
For want of decency is want of sense.”

I—anxious to let her know that the lines were not, as they are very generally thought to be, Pope’s—said, “ Oh, I see you have been looking at Roscommon.”—“ Not I,” said the dear innocent. “ We went last week to Ross churchyard, to admire the view, but we had not time to go upon the Common.” Only imagine such exquisite naturalness, or, as our friend the poet would call it, such “viridity of intel-

lect;" such incomparable innocence. But I must have done; so remember, in three days you shall hear again, and in the mean time, once more say I, keep up your spirits.

Yours always,

R. F. DALY.

I read this letter with a degree of pleasure and anxiety, which few can appreciate; and till I came to the end of it, I can scarcely say which of the two predominated. But when I arrived at its conclusion, and found it one continued history of Daly's own proceedings, his own happiness, and, as it appeared to me, his own flirtations and successes therein, I honestly admit, that anxiety most incontestibly triumphed. It appeared to me that the minister had forgotten the monarch, and that he was acting independently, not with the mother, as he had first proposed, but with Emma. And then I began to reprove myself—knowing his extraordinary qualities, as I did—with having been prevailed upon to send such a man upon such a

mission. I did not then quite as well know, as I have learned since, how madly fond women are of any thing very odd, and very notorious. When Lunardi first exhibited to the English public the sight of a gentleman, tied in a basket, under a silk bag, carried up into the clouds by means of hydrogen gas, he became the idol of the women; they wore Lunardi hats, and Lunardi bonnets, and balloon petticoats, and parachute caps; and even went the length of cutting strips from his coat, as relics, and making a point of touching him as he paraded for that and such-like purposes in the Pantheon in Oxford Street. Now, although Daly had never practised Icarusism, and had confined his efforts to mother earth, his reputation had soared—he was known, talked of, praised by some, abused by others, and laughed at by many; but still he was talked of. This unquestionable claim to female attention and favour he possessed to a considerable extent; and being what is conventionally termed “a privileged person,” (the precise meaning of which I do not pretend exactly

to understand) his life—as indeed I have already recorded—was one continued series of incidents, best calculated to maintain—what, I admit, *I* should have considered—a most unenviable distinction from his fellow men.

It certainly appeared—from whatever cause it might arise—that he had assumed the character of hero of *my* romance in his own person: that there was any thing like acting “in the name and on the behalf” of his friend, I could not, from any part of his communication, discover; and I felt very much inclined to address him upon the subject, and endeavour, by gently pulling the check-string, to remind him that there *was* such a person as Gilbert Gurney in the world: a circumstance which, it seemed to me, had entirely slipped his memory. But then we had previously agreed that I was not to write to him during his disinterested siege of Miss Haines, lest the appearance of a letter from me (the superscription to which, in such a community as a watering-place, would, in all probability, be seen by more than the one person to whom it was directed)

should mar his manœuvres, and blow up the scheme altogether. This circumstance, and the apprehensions connected with it, of course prevented me from taking the only step which could satisfactorily relieve the doubts, which the style of my friend's letter, I confess, began to excite in no very inconsiderable degree.

A few days, however, served to throw a new light upon the affair, and leave me in the full blaze of conviction of his skill and adroitness, his insincerity and his treachery; for before the expiration of another fortnight, during which he had reported to me a conversation which he had had with Miss Haines, of which, he told me, I formed the leading subject, Hull, my omniscient Hull, called upon me for the second time, his eyes sparkling with the consciousness of "happening to know" something, yet conveying an expression not altogether free from concern and regret. It is impossible to describe the April-like character of his countenance, as he sat himself down opposite to me at my breakfast table.

"Well," said I, "what news have you got?"

“News, my dear friend,” replied Hull, “*I* have *no* news; you have plenty—eh—.”

I looked a negative.

“Pooh, pooh, don’t tell me,” continued my companion; “can’t hoax me; you know well enough—so do I.”

“I know nothing, I assure you,” said I; “nor can I even guess to what you allude.”

“Allude!” exclaimed Hull, with a sort of crow; “why, my dear Sir, it’s known every where—all over London. Jem Burrows knows it—so does his wife. Come, come, you are joking—it won’t do—if *you* are sorry for it, so am *I*—I don’t believe you care twopence about it.”

“About what?” asked I.

“Are you in earnest?” said Hull. “I hate to be laughed at—eh—you don’t mean to say that you have not heard—about your friend Daly?”

“I heard *from* him a few days since,” said I.

“Where was he then?” said Hull.

“At Malvern,” was my reply.

“ You won’t hear from him at Malvern again,” said Hull—“ left that Monday last.”

“ Are you sure ?” said I.

“ Sure—my dear Sir,” said Hull : “ I happen to know it ; spoke to a man yesterday who passed him on the road between Cheltenham and Oxford.”

“ On Monday,” said I ; “ surely I should have either seen or heard from him if that were so.”

“ No, you won’t either hear or see from him in a hurry,” said Hull, looking diabolically cunning.

“ I’ll go forthwith to his lodgings, and obtain information from Redmond.”

“ Redmond isn’t there,” said Hull ; “ he is with his master.”

“ How do you know that ?” said I.

“ I called at his lodgings before I came here,” said Hull.

“ At his lodgings !” said I ; “ why, you told me you were not in the habit of visiting him.”

“Quite right,” said Hull; “but I happen to know his landlady, Mrs. Widdlecum; have known her these two-and-thirty years. Pooh, pooh, my dear Sir, you can’t deceive me; knew her when her husband kept the Caxton’s Head, in Bear-binder Lane, before you were born. I had heard of Daly’s movements, so I called upon her to inquire; and I found Redmond, Daly’s servant, gone, and the lodgings given up—now do you smell a rat?”

“I suppose,” said I, “that Daly has got into some infernal scrape, and has been forced to bolt.”

“Scrape!” exclaimed Hull; “now be serious; you don’t mean to say that you are ignorant of the truth?”

“I mean to say,” replied I, “that I know nothing whatever of his movements during the last ten days.”

“Then you have been very ill used,” said Hull—“my dear Sir, he is married.”

“You don’t mean it,” said I: “cunning dog—and he has really carried his point, and with-

out ever letting me know it. And pray, as you know every thing, where is Emma?"

"Where?" said Hull; "where should she be but with *him*? But, my dear friend, what do you mean by carrying his point?"

"It was part of our scheme," said I—"only don't betray me—that he should take this step with regard to one of the ladies, in order to leave me the quiet possessor of the other."

"What other?" said Hull.

"Emma," said I.

"Emma!" echoed Hull; "my dear Sir, you don't even yet comprehend me—Daly has eloped from Malvern with Miss Haines—Emma—eh—pooh pooh."

"With Emma!" said I—incredulous in the highest degree—"no, no, Mr. Hull; you know a great many things, but here, for once, you *are* mistaken."

"Mistaken!" said Hull;—"my dear Sir, you'll see a long account of it in the Chronicle to-morrow."

“ May be so,” said I ; “ and a strong contradiction of it the day after.”

“ I’ll stake my head on the truth of it,” said Hull : “ Billy Bowles knows Daly as well as *you* do—he told me the fact—saw him with Miss Haines, on Monday, galloping in a chaise and four, from the inn at Northleach, towards Oxford.”

“ It is impossible,” said I—and at the moment I said so, my thoughts flew to the tone and character of Daly’s last letter. In the next minute I began to fancy it might be so—thence my ideas rushed to the consequences of such perfidy, and I began to cast about in my mind where I should find a fit person to act as friend, and call the traitor to account.—“ It cannot be,” said I.

“ But it *is* so,” said Hull. “ My dear Sir, it is never worth my while to state what I don’t happen to know to be fact : rely upon it, you have been ill-used.”

“ And depend upon it, Mr. Hull,” said I, “ if I have, I will have satisfaction for such conduct.”

“ Satisfaction,” said Hull; “ pooh, pooh—” what satisfaction is there in shooting at a man who is shooting at you at the same time; who is irrevocably united to *your* sweetheart:—no—no—take my advice—treat the affair with philosophy and contempt.”

“ You must permit me,” said I, “ to be the best judge in this case; no man can appreciate another’s feelings under such circumstances, and therefore no man can direct or guide his conduct: baseness like Mr. Daly’s must not go unpunished.”

“ His conduct is not to be defended, that’s certain,” said Hull.

“ And where,” said I, “ is it supposed—admitting the rumour to be well founded—that the happy couple are gone?”

“ Northward,” said Hull; “ across from Oxford. She is under age, as I happen to know.”

“ But now really,” said I, feeling as if I were in a dream, or but that moment awakened from one, “ is this true? is it possible that a man can have behaved in such a manner?”

“ You’ll find it true enough,” said Hull; “ and there is one great consolation in the affair—a girl so easily won is not worth having—that’s *my* maxim—has been through life—that’s the reason I have never married.”

“ Fickle, fickle Emma,” said I.

“ Rely upon it,” continued Hull, “ Daly will give you some good reasons for his conduct, and convince you in the end, that he has done you a service, instead of an injury.”

“ Well,” said I—and the sensation of stupefaction, which the intelligence had caused, made me appear perfectly calm and collected—“ we shall see.”

I saw that my kind-hearted companion, Hull, was greatly pleased with the placidity of my manner, and perfectly satisfied with the notion that the thing would go no further. He did not seem to be aware of the different external effects produced by the working of our passions; and, when he left me, little calculated that the first step I was about to take, was to proceed to Knightsbridge barracks, in order to secure the

good offices of a most agreeable friend, who held a lieutenant's commission in one of the regiments of Life Guards, who in those days, and before they had proved their prowess and gallantry in the field of glory, were wont to campaign in Hyde Park, or at Wormwood Scrubs, dressed in cocked hats, jack-boots, and long pig-tails—as witness the facetious parodist, who, in 1812, said—

“ God bless their pig-tails, *though they're now cut off.*”

Which savours a little of the spirit of the celebrated distich on the Scotch roads:—

“ Had you but seen these roads *before they were made,*
You'd lift up your hands, and bless MARSHAL WADE.”

N'importe; so it was: and to the gallant lieutenant with the tail, I imparted the history of the injury I had received at the hands of my pseudo friend. I still confidently hoped that the story was groundless; but, supposing it to be true, I rejoiced to find that the gallant officer perfectly coincided in my view of the course to be adopted; and agreed with me, that nothing short of

shooting my friend, and making his enamoured and devoted bride a disconsolate widow on the spot, ought to satisfy my injured feelings. Nothing could be more acceptable to me than the readiness with which he offered his assistance, in the arrangement of the result, consequent upon his advice, in order to bring the affair to a conclusion the moment we heard of Daly's arrival within our reach. We became mutually interested in each other; and having passed the forenoon with him, we partook together of an early dinner in his room, which was on the highest floor of the building, and commanded an agreeable view of Hyde Park.

The following morning terminated all my doubts as to the fact. I read in the Chronicle a clear and distinct account of the elopement from Malvern, and the steps taken by Mrs. Haines to pursue and recover her fugitive daughter. I was satisfied. And it is not unworthy of remark, to those who doubt the moral influence of the public press, that although Hull had himself foretold the appearance of this detail in the

newspaper, and had evidently written it himself, I did not hesitate to admit its truth the moment I saw it in print, although I was seriously sceptical when the man himself told me the fact, which he subsequently communicated to the journal.

If, however, any lurking doubts could yet remain, the following letter, dated from Stockport, put an end to all of them. It was a sort of prose duet from Emma and Daly united. In those punning days of my life, I could not doubt which of the performers had taken the *base* part. It formed No. 5. of our correspondence, and I therefore subjoin it.

MY DEAR GURNEY,

For I hope you will still allow me so to call and consider you—your surprise at the receipt of this letter I can easily imagine ; as well can I conceive your anger and resentment at what, without explanation, must appear to you my treacherous and insidious conduct. It is not improbable that intelli-

gence of the step we have taken may have reached you through the public papers, before this can come to your hands: whether it be so, or not, the fact is, I am married—and if that were all, I might stop, and entreat you to receive me and my bride with sufficient kindness to outweigh the anger of her mother; but as the individual to whom I am united for life, is one in whom you have taken a deep and tender interest, it becomes necessary that I should farther explain myself before we meet.

I am married to Emma Haines—you now have the truth—and I really think, when you become acquainted with all the circumstances of the case you will neither embitter our prospects of happiness by continuing hostile to the match, nor permit either of us to suffer in your good opinion in consequence of what we have done.

Were I alone to describe to you the particulars of the affair or to attempt to depict the motives and feelings by which Emma has been actuated, you might imagine that I was endeavouring to palliate a breach of confidence at

the expense of sincerity and even truth. She therefore finishes this letter, and I conclude here, by earnestly entreating you to see the matter in its true light, and accept the olive branch which your amiable and sincere friend holds out.

So far went Daly—then comes his better half.

DEAR MR. GURNEY,

My husband has read me what he has written to you upon the subject of our marriage, leaving it to me to give an account of my feelings towards you, and a justification of conduct, which, while it doubtlessly appears to *your* view, almost unjustifiable, involves *him*, for whom I have the warmest affection and the sincerest regard in circumstances of delicacy and difficulty.

The truth, however, will I trust, exonerate us both from any imputation of insincerity. When first we had the pleasure of making your

acquaintance, I will not deny that I was highly pleased with your manners, talents, and accomplishments, and the hours I passed in your society were reckoned by me amongst the pleasantest of the day. I am not in the habit of concealing my feelings or disguising the gratification I feel in the enjoyment of conversation with clever and agreeable people; but I felt it necessary in my later interviews with you to put a restraint upon myself, and even affect a coolness which does not naturally belong to me, because I saw too plainly that you began to misconstrue my friendship into some tenderer feeling. Gratified as I was in your society, I lived in perpetual apprehension that under a mistaken notion of the character of my sentiments towards you, you would make a declaration and an offer, which, according to the common rules of the world, would necessarily terminate our acquaintance. What I dreaded, actually came to pass, and you were excluded from our house. In order to render the affair less remarkable to our acquaintance, who might have

been inquisitive as to the cause of your sudden disappearance, my mother, at my suggestion, removed to Tenby, nor will I deny that a change of scene was rendered more agreeable to me from the altered circumstances of our domestic circle.

From the time we left Brighton to the present moment, I never heard of you, never imagined that I occupied the smallest share of your care or attention; and I therefore became happy in the belief that whatever prepossession you might have entertained in my favour had been overcome, and that in a year or two our friendship might possibly be resumed upon its original footing, a circumstance to which I assure you I looked forward with pleasure, and which even now I anticipate.

It was therefore without the slightest feeling of injustice towards you, of whom I never for one moment thought except as a friend, that I received the attentions of Mr. Daly; in the natural openness of my disposition I did not attempt to conceal the feeling he had excited,

and here it is that I must give him the praise which he justly merits at your hands. In a conversation induced by our constant association, and in which I did not affect to disguise my sentiments towards him, he confessed himself your friend, and advocate for my favour—explained to me the cause of his backwardness in reciprocating an affection which he could not but have perceived, and it was not until I had most solemnly assured him, not only that I never would unite myself with you, but that I had never entertained the most distant intention of doing so, that he confessed himself, and proposed the only step by which *my* happiness, and I hope *his*, could possibly be secured; for much as I could have wished to avoid the *éclat* of an elopement, my mother's determination to make me the wife of a venerable Peer, now staying at Malvern, drove us to the expedient of trying to obtain her forgiveness upon the principle of “ what is done cannot be undone.”

Under these circumstances, I do trust to your goodness of heart and kindness of feeling, as

well as to the memory of our past friendship, to meet and receive us as we most desire upon our return to London, to which place we are proceeding by easy stages, so as to be there on Thursday next. Assure yourself of my continued esteem, as you may of that of Mr. Daly's, who is, as I am, and always hope to be,

Your's most truly and sincerely,

EMMA DALY.

In witness of my approval of all this, I hereunto set my hand,

R. F. DALY.

I read this joint effusion twice over attentively. It certainly altered the character of Daly's conduct towards me, and changed that of Emma's apparent frivolity, and fickleness—yet I found but little consolation in it, for their joint palliation was based upon my own vanity, and Emma's original indifference; and yet, thought I, if girls will talk with their eyes, it must require a greater knowledge of the art, than I possess, to distinguish between

the animated sparkle of simple friendship, and the devoted gaze of love; for if I misread the expression of Emma's looks at Brighton, I must have been anything but an adept. True it is I never had spoken on the subject, and true it is that when I opened my heart to Daly, his opinion of my want of energy was pretty strongly expressed. Here however I was, enlightened upon the point, and left to lament, as I thought, the loss of an object which, if it had not been seized upon by another would never have been mine.

My gallant friend in the jack-boots, cocked-hat, and pig-tail, to whom I of course communicated the letter, was of a very different opinion: he declared his belief to be that Emma *had* entertained an affection for me, of a more tender and warmer character than mere friendship; that she had been induced by her new husband to make the disavowal, in order to shield him from the consequences; and that, in point of fact, the stratagem which, with his usual ability, he had contrived, of *her* writing

part of *his* letter, added to the baseness of his conduct, because it considerably increased his meanness.

“The affair,” said Lieutenant O’Brady, “is in my keeping, Mr. Gurney—that man is a poltroon—he hides himself behind his lady’s fan—we must have him out the moment he arrives.”

“You think so?” said I.

“Think so!” replied the Lieutenant,—“by the powers, Sir, if *you* don’t think so too, we must make the matter personal between ourselves.”

“Oh!” said I, “I am in your hands—you alone are to regulate my proceedings.”

“Right, Gurney, right,” replied O’Brady, “and by the powers, right shall be done you, that you may rely upon—I hate this fellow for making his wife come forward—och—won’t we settle that affair—send him home hopping.”

“Anything you please,” said I, feeling, I confess, a doubt, whether under the circumstances Daly was so very much to blame—however,

honour is everything, and if my Irish friend considered it right that I should lame or maim my English friend, because he had run away with a girl—or, as it almost appeared to me, permitted himself to be run away with—who openly declared that she neither did, would, nor could, feel any affection for *me*, of course I could not object, and therefore begged him to do me the favour to wait upon Daly as soon as possible after his arrival in town.

I never saw a man so ready to oblige another in the whole course of my life—his activity was quite edifying; nevertheless, I admit, that the necessary delay of two or three days, was particularly irksome to me. The constant consideration of the subject—not a particularly pleasant one—combined with the natural tendency of my mind to justify and even forgive the offender, kept me in a new state of excitement; and if truth were to be told, I do think that my readiness to be reconciled to Daly, was not altogether disconnected from the lurking affection for Mrs. Fletcher Green. The

proceedings of Daly and Emma, whatever their genuine character might be, had the entire effect of leaving me free to perfect *that* alliance, and since the avowal of Miss Haines's indifference, it was surprising to find how very much my feelings of admiration for *her* had diminished in their force. However, I had the affair of honour to settle, and Daly, who was a crack shot, might perhaps do me the favour of providing for me in another way.

On the third morning after the receipt of the partnership letter, to which of course I returned no answer, nor should I have done so, even had I been able to despatch it so as to catch the travellers, I beheld in the announcement of fashionable arrivals at Thomas's Hotel, Berkeley Square, "Mr. and Mrs. Daly, from the North." The lynx-eyed champion of my fame and respectability had seen it even before I had, and by twelve o'clock my active friend Lieutenant O'Brady was at my lodgings.

"Well," said he, breathless with haste and delight, "it's all settled—"

“What?” said I.

“That little matter between you and Mr. Daly,” said the Lieutenant, “I have seen him, spoken to him—a deuced nice clever fellow he seems to be—so—we have arranged it all—the thing is done and over.”

“I am extremely glad to hear it,” said I, convinced that a little explanation and discussion had smoothed all difficulties, and terminated the affair.

“I thought you would,” said the Lieutenant; “it’s a bore to have this sort of thing upon one’s mind longer than necessary—I have fixed the meeting for four o’clock this afternoon.”

“Meeting!” said I.

“To be sure,” said O’Brady, “what did you expect I meant?”

“Oh, nothing,” replied I; “where is it to be?”

“I’ll tell you as we go,” said the Lieutenant, who seemed by his cautious mode of giving me the information, to imagine that I might be tempted just to drop in at Marlborough Street police-office on the way.

“He behaved quite like a gentleman, that I *must* say,” said O’Brady; “referred me to a friend who happened to be with him—said he expected as much—inquired if you had received his letter—I answered in the affirmative—so he walked out of the room, and leaving the Major, as he called him, to settle preliminaries, we have concluded the same, and I will call for you at three.”

“But now,” said I, “under all the circumstances, what is it I am to do?—I mean to say, what am I to require?”

“Require,” said the Lieutenant, “you have nothing to do but to fire at him, till you have hit him, or he hits you, or until his friend and I agree that the thing has gone far enough.”

“Because,” said I, really wishing to know the end of the meeting, “he cannot make an apology for running away with a young lady upon whom I have no claim, and who has declared her affection for him, and her indifference towards me.”

“What in the world has that to do with it?”

said O'Brady,—“you trusted him—he betrayed you—why didn't he write, and let you into his affairs.”

“Because he would have betrayed his plan,” said I, “and exposed himself to detection by her mother, or at all events put himself at my mercy.”

“Och ! that's it,” said O'Brady “all that might be mighty well for *his* friend to advance—you have nothing to do with that—the plain fact is this, you have put yourself into my hands—I have called the man out, and he is coming ; and if you thought any thing like what you talk, you ought never to have come to me at all.”

“But, my dear O'Brady,” said I, “when I came to you I had heard only the report, I had not received the joint explanation——”

“Explanation !” said O'Brady, “the explanation only makes the matter worse ; the thing cannot be altered now—it is all too late ; if he is right, and you think so, you need not try to hit him, only I would just advise you not to throw away a chance, because you may rely

upon it, as he has, in my opinion injured, he is not in the least likely to spare, you."

"You are perfectly empowered to take me where you please," said I; "my conduct, when I *am* out, will be regulated by my feelings."

"I'll trust to you," said O'Brady, "and so I will be here at three, with the doctor of our regiment, in case of accidents; and if you have a spare pocket handkerchief or two, you can just wile away the time till we come, by scraping them up into lint:" saying which, my gallant friend departed, with one of his liveliest "*au revoirs*," leaving me to the enjoyment of my own thoughts, and the interesting employment of lint-scraping, for my own benefit.

I certainly felt no disinclination to the coming affair on the score of physical apprehension; but I do candidly admit, that the tone and spirit of O'Brady's reasoning upon the matter, led me to consider the principle upon which such things are usually conducted, and their frequent occurrence upon occasions when, it must be clear, they are perfectly unnecessary. Because, under

a certain impression, I had suggested to my gallant friend my belief that I had been betrayed and injured by Daly, now that I was satisfied that Emma had thrown me over—(as dinners are dressed at suburban taverns “on the shortest notice,”) and that Daly really was not in fault, I could not be permitted to change my line of proceeding with my opinion of his demerits. Of course I had now no alternative, and accordingly I waited the arrival of my excellent second and the regimental surgeon; resolving in my own mind, as far as *my* share of the rencontre was concerned, that he should not be called into service.

Three o'clock at length arrived; and, punctual to the moment, so did my friends. O'Brady stepped out of the coach, in which he and the surgeon drove up to the door, and summoned me. I obeyed his call, and in a few minutes we were on our way towards Hampstead.

“Where are we to meet?” said I.

“Under the lee of Primrose Hill,” said O'Brady;—“a sporting spot. The Major and

I had fixed Wimbledon Common; but as the Old Bailey Sessions are now on, I thought it might be more convenient to fight in Middlesex."

The word Old Bailey Sessions brought to my mind all the scenes I had so recently witnessed there, and the peril to which my antagonist, if he killed me, might be exposed upon the zig-zag system of trial. The inviting words, "hang at eight and breakfast at nine," rang in my ears; however, having made up my mind, not to fire *at* Daly, I consoled myself with the certainty, that if I escaped the bullet, the halter was altogether out of the question.

We proceeded up the hill of Camden Town, and having arrived at the lane leading to Chalk Farm, the coach stopped, and we alighted, I being, I confess, a little surprised at seeing no weapons wherewith we were to contend: however, O'Brady, who had evidently been there before, whispered something to the Doctor, to which he appeared to assent, and the coachman was directed to stop—I concluded, for the pur-

pose of removing my corpse to my lodgings, if I was killed; or my yet living body, if I were only severely wounded.

“Come on,” said O’Brady, “don’t let us be last on the ground.”

“Where are the pistols?” said I.

“Och, put your heart at ease about that,” said O’Brady; “my man Sullivan is under the hedge long before this; and has got the Mantons and the doctor’s instrument-case, in a carpet-bag. Sully may be trusted in such matters; mayn’t he, doctor?”

“He may indeed,” said the military Esculapius, who appeared to me to be just as much pleased as his companion with the deadly-lively adventure in which we were embarked.

“There they are,” said O’Brady, pointing to two persons at a considerable distance, who were approaching us in a direction nearly opposite to that by which we had reached the neighbourhood; and sure enough there I saw Daly—the admirable Daly—once my friend, and, perhaps, not even now my enemy—accompanied by a

tall, gaunt personage, whose name I inquired of the Lieutenant.

“That,” said O’Brady, “is Major M’Guffin.”

“M’Guffin!” said I; and the history of the depilatory and the night-cap flashed into my mind; and, more than that, flashed into my mind the conviction that Daly had succeeded in rivetting his fetters with the widow; and by inducing him to undertake the part which, in the earlier stage of the proceeding, he had proposed himself to play, secured the augmentation of the gentle Emma’s fortune.

My feelings were considerably excited as we approached the hostile pair; it was impossible for me to forget the happy and agreeable hours which I had spent in Daly’s company, nor entirely to obliterate from my recollection the caution of my poor mother, with regard to my associates; for here—as if she had possessed the gift of prophesying—was I, after a sort of scape-grace acquaintance with the maddest wag of London, destined, perhaps, to terminate my

existence prematurely, in consequence of his misconduct. My first impulse was to walk up to the rogue, and offer him my hand; but, to do O'Brady justice, his anxiety to keep up the quarrel as it stood, never relaxed. He desired me to stop where I was, while he went forward to speak to the Major. I obeyed, and entered into a conversation with the surgeon as to the healthiness of Hampstead, keeping my eye, however, on the watch for Daly, who seemed to me to be strongly imbued with feelings greatly assimilating to my own. However, *his* Major and *my* Lieutenant were the gentlemen to be satisfied; and as it appeared this could not happen unless the principals fought, I suppose he, as I had already done, bowed to the necessity of asserting his courage, as I had felt it imperative to vindicate my honour; and so it was that two lives were jeopardized.

Major M'Guffin having said a few words, Lieutenant O'Brady cried, "Halloo;" and out of a ditch sprang his trusty squire, Jem Sullivan, with the carpet bag, which contained the weapons;

and no sooner did the surgeon behold this manœuvre, than he turned to the groupe, and secured his case of instruments; and having redelivered them to the man, with some particular instructions to be careful of them, walked away to a distance, and never turned his face round till the event had come off, lest in case of any accident, he should be subpoenaed as a witness.

Our worthy friends now proceeded to load the pistols, during which process I did not in the least know how to act with regard to Daly: the time, however, was short, and the Lieutenant having concluded his part of the business, walked up to me, and desired me to stand where he placed me: he then stepped out six paces; at the end of which, Major M'Guffin stepped out six more: at the end of which he placed Daly, to whom he gave one of his pistols; as the Lieutenant handed me one of his.

“Gentlemen,” said Major M'Guffin, “we have agreed that you are to fire together, by signal one, two, three:—raise and present at the one, two; and fire at the three.”

“ Now,” said Daly, “ just one word : we are met here to answer the call of Mr. Gurney ; no opportunity has been afforded me of explaining to him circumstances which——”

“ Sir,” said Lieutenant O’Brady, “ I have no doubt you mean extremely well ; but we are here to fight, Sir, and not to talk.”

“ But,” said I, “ Lieutenant O’Brady——”

“ Mr. Gurney,” said the Lieutenant, “ you are not in a position to speak : we are not to be trifled with, Sir.”

“ Oh, well,” said Daly, “ no more are *we* ; therefore to business, and the sooner the better.”

“ Are you ready, gentlemen ?” said the Major.

“ Yes,” was the reply.

“ One, two —— ;” and before the gallant officer could get any farther, my pistol, which had the hair trigger set, went off ; and the ball having grazed the calf of my leg, and ripped up the side of my pantaloons, lodged in the ground immediately at my foot. I was never more mortified in my life—the thing was so awkward—not to

speaking of a stinging sort of feeling, which the scraping off of the flesh inflicted.

“That comes of hair-triggers,” said Daly, coolly.

“Why don’t you fire, Mr. Daly?” said the Major.

“I?” said Daly.

“To be sure,” said the Major; “the other gentleman has had *his* shot.”

“Faith it *is* so,” said the Lieutenant; “go on, Sir; go on.”

“Not I, by Jove,” said Daly, “unless Mr. Gurney takes his other pistol, and fires at me.”

“He can do no such thing,” said both the gentlemen.

“Very well, then,” said Daly, “if I *am* to fire, I suppose I may choose my own direction:” saying which, he raised his pistol perpendicularly, and fired in the air.

“The devil, Sir!” said his Major, “what are you about?”

“Do you mean to affront my friend, Sir?” said my Lieutenant.

“Not I, by heaven,” said Daly; “no more than I ever meant to injure him. You had better, in the first instance, call your surgeon, and see that he is not more hurt than you fancy. I came here at his call, and will stay here as long as he likes; but I will not take advantage of an accident.”

“Mighty handsome,” said the Lieutenant; “that I *must* say; but we want no doctor yet; so let us proceed; and now mind, Mr. Gurney, mind and be more careful the next time.”

What might have happened had the combat continued, it is impossible to say; it was destined to terminate without any other bloodshed than that which, by my *gaucherie*, I had caused; for scarcely had the words “next time” escaped the lips of the gallant Lieutenant, before five or six men, three or four boys, and two or three constables, bounced over a stile, which gave, or rather hindered, entrance to the field. Two of the fellows rushed at *me*, and seized me by the collar. The doctor took to his heels in the direction of his instrument case; and Daly, who

was a dab at every thing, took a hedge and ditch with a run, like that of a Leicestershire hunter, equal to sixteen stone. Major M'Guffin, in an endeavour to follow his leader, stuck in a hawthorn bush ; but was eventually lugged out by his principal, who, taking advantage of the peculiar care and attention with which the Bow Street patrols—as they turned out to be—favoured me and the Lieutenant, was “over the hills and far away” before any of the heavy-heeled Christians could touch him. Of me they were secure ; for although my self-inflicted wound was “neither as deep as a well, nor as wide as a church door,” it prevented my following the example of the gallant fugitives, whose departure, I honestly confess, was one of the most agreeable sights I ever saw, convinced, as I was, that Daly had no more desire to hit *me*, than I had to touch *him*.

The sequel was unpleasant—the Philistines would by no means let us go ; and the consequence was, that although the gallant Galen declared he would not be answerable for what

might happen if I were suddenly transported to the police office to enter into sureties to keep the peace, they unmercifully bundled me and my gallant second into our own hackney-coach, which had been, at their suggestion, brought up the lane. The indignation of my fiery friend, O'Brady, at this interference of the law with our arrangement, was beyond description great; but whatever this interruption might have cost him, it was nothing compared with his fury when one of the myrmidons insisted upon keeping his pistols. I never saw a man in such a rage in my life: however, as I anticipated, I had sufficient influence at Bow Street, the smouldering remnant of my early acquaintance with the chief magistrate, to get the matter arranged much to his satisfaction. I entered into the required recognizances; and by the intervention of Mr. Stafford, the chief clerk, who seemed to me to manage the whole business of the office,

“ Ride on the whirlwind, and direct the storm,”

obtained the restoration of O'Brady's “ barking

irons," as he called them; to the peculiarly delicate touch of whose *double detente* I was specially indebted for a wound in my leg, which, although by no means serious, was not by any means agreeable.

When the whole of the business was over, I sincerely regretted the interruption which had taken place, because I felt convinced, by Daly's manner, that he had plenty of matter of justification to adduce for what had occurred; and because, although irritated, and even enraged, at what, upon the first blush of the affair, appeared to be his flagrant misconduct, I saw by his manner, and by his gallant, yet considerate bearing towards me, under our very peculiar circumstances, that I should have received explanation sufficient to establish and confirm his exculpation from misbehaviour towards me in the character of rival; as it was, no such explanation could take place, we were parted much as we met: indeed the only consolation O'Brady seemed to experience, even under the dread of losing his pistols, was derived from the fact that the sureties were only for twelve months, and

the certainty that upon the three hundredth and sixty-sixth day from the date thereof, I might have him out again, and shoot at him to my heart's content.

I had no such wish—no such intention—no such thought; and the first step I took upon my return to my lodgings, was to send and inquire whether Daly had succeeded in escaping the fangs of the police. I was glad to hear he had; but I honestly admit, I felt sorry to find that he and Mrs. Daly had, almost immediately after his return home, and, as I believe, without her being at all aware of the cause of his temporary absence, taken their departure for the West of England. I ascertained the reality, too, of what I had only suspected—the reconciliation of the family party had been produced; and the anger, which seemed to have been of the “*brevis ira*” school, soothed by the intended union of Mrs. Haines with the Major, which was to take place in the course of the ensuing week: so that, in fact, Daly had carried every point for himself, which he had suggested as worthy of my atten-

tion. But what then? Emma had preferred him to me: she denied ever having cared for me beyond that sort of friendly feeling, which must sometimes exist between men and women; and most certainly, if she ever did entertain any softer or warmer feeling, her sudden abandonment of that attachment, made it quite clear that I had made no great impression on her heart, and had sustained no great loss on the transfer of her affections.

The sudden departure of the Dalys put an end to any further explanation between us; and circumstances, which subsequently occurred, rendered them entirely unnecessary, as the sequel will show. That they or I should quit London just at this period, was what I wished—all I lamented was, that I had not an opportunity of showing my magnanimity, as well as the sense I entertained of his honourable conduct, in not taking advantage of my inexperience with regard to hair triggers. As for O'Brady, his chief anxiety about my wound—which was in fact scarcely worth talking of—seemed to arise from

the hope that, at the twelvemonth's end, when I had Daly out again, I should be more cautious. Before those twelve months expired, my poor friend, O'Brady, was himself shot dead, in consequence of a quarrel about play.

My course, however, now seemed clear—what the tendency of my feelings was, may be guessed at by the fact, that being able, on the third day after the duel, to walk nearly as well as ever, I proceeded to the neighbourhood of Park Lane, to inquire whether Mrs. Fletcher Green had returned to town: the answer was, she was expected that evening at home to dinner, and was going to the last opera of the season that night. In addition to every other feeling with regard to the lady, I was piqued into an attempt to gain her hand at this crisis, inasmuch as, besides ensuring my lasting happiness by my success, its achievement would practically relieve me from the imputation of willow-wearing, and vindicate my character as a lady-killer. I therefore secretly rejoiced in the information, and took my measures accordingly.

CHAPTER IV.

ALTHOUGH I had never yet had an opportunity of making any distinct declaration of my sentiments to the amiable widow, I yet flattered myself that I had rendered her sensible of the preference she had excited by a thousand little nameless assiduities, and that sort of watchful devotion which women not only readily understand, but very particularly approve of. I began seriously to revolve in my mind the words which Daly had formerly whispered in my ear, and although I never had in my whole composition, as I hope and believe, one grain of mercenary feeling, still I do admit that the fact of

Mrs. Fletcher Green's having so large a sum as one hundred thousand pounds at her own disposal was not calculated to check the affection which her beauty, accomplishments, and above all, her agreeable conversation, had inspired; and with a consciousness that, had she been penniless, I should have been equally captivated, however prudence might in that case have checked a declaration of my sentiments, I resolved, now that I was entirely at liberty, to cultivate with ardour and assiduity the good understanding which I flattered myself existed between us, and lay myself out for an invitation to her house, which upon several occasions, under feelings of a different character, I had previously refused.

This manœuvre, however trifling its object may appear to some people, was one which required a certain degree of courage as well as skill; the consciousness that a man has a point to gain, always more or less unnerves him; and many a time in my life, when I have been invited to join a party in which there has been

some one individual with whom I would have given the world to pass the day, the very fear of doing that, which I most longed to do, has induced me refuse; lest my anxiety to accept the bidding might betray me, perhaps to *her* in whom I felt so deep an interest, or to those who, in the character of "lookers on," might have seen more of the game than the players.

Mrs. Fletcher Green, however, was a widow, and that *does* make a difference—it would be all idleness to go on shillying-shallying with *her*—this reflection strengthened me in my purpose, and accordingly, acting on the intelligence I had received, I went that night to the Opera. Her box, now become familiar to my eye, was on the pit tier, and therefore attackable in its front—a most fortunate circumstance for me, as after my continued shyness and repeated refusals of invitations, I did not feel my acquaintance with its owner sufficiently matured to justify my calling to the box-keeper to open "Mrs. Fletcher Green's box" in the ordinary manner, *viâ* the lobby. Accordingly

I planted myself directly in front of the well-known

“ Shady blest retreat ”

almost as soon as the *premier coup d'archet* had hushed the anxious amateurs into silence.

The overture ended—the curtain rose—no Mrs. Fletcher Green. A group of wretched creatures began the opera, in the garb of priests, with grey beards, and green wreaths on their heads, led by two more distinguished rarities, who interchanged alternately the softest and most martial sentiments of love and glory in the jingle of recitative. The scene ended by the history of the murder of a Prince and nine illustrious scions of his royal house, quavered forth by a very disagreeable lady to a “ popular air ” with variations. “ Ah,” said I, getting quite impatient with the absence of the widow, “ how truly has the Italian Opera been likened to the pillory, where those who are nailed by the ears expose their heads ! ”

The storm of sorrow and its accompaniments ended, I again turned and looked into the box—

still was the casket without the jewel—I began to grow more and more uneasy—I nodded to three or four friends who were near me, but I thought not of them—I felt that nervous sinking of heart which no man who has not been in a similar situation can duly appreciate—the heroes with their tin helmets and leathern armour, their painted cheeks, corked whiskers, and chalked necks, sickened me to death—I began to hate everything near me and round me—when, sweeter to me than all the harmony of the stage, I suddenly heard the running rattle of the rings upon the rods, and turning instinctively to the sound, I beheld in the very act of drawing back the curtain destined to screen her from the too ardent gaze of the world in general, the charming Mrs. Fletcher Green !

I caught away my eyes, and affected not to have seen her. I thought of the owl and the sun—I believe I trembled—the top of my head was so near her hand that I almost fancied it touched me. What should I do—turn again and boldly face her—or should I wait a little

and affect to be surprised at my proximity?—why should I? Dear soul! true, most true it is, that she was everything that could be amiable, delicate, charming, and accomplished—yet, after all, she *was* but a woman; and would she be *so* angry if she really *did* find out that I had come there before the overture began, to secure that particular spot in order to be near her?

I asked myself that question, and I answered it thus—“I do not think she will;—at all events, if she be, it will terminate my pursuit of her—better be nipped in the bud,” thought I, “than linger.” However, I was still young, and it required a considerable exertion to put my look in execution—I drew a long breath, and fired my glance.

Never shall I forget the beautiful expression of her animated countenance, when with—what I now believe to have been a feigned—surprise, she exclaimed, “Is that *you*, Mr. Gurney?” extending at the same moment that hand which, as I now began to think, would some day be entirely my own. I felt confused

and delighted—indeed, I am almost ashamed to own all that I did feel, for I am sure I must have appeared exceedingly silly to her searching and experienced eye; but if the condescension which she had in the first instance evinced, somewhat unsteadied me, what did I experience when she leant her face over the front of the box, and asked me “whether I had not better come round to them?” By Jove, I felt her breath upon my cheek—her sister was with her—I could not answer, but I looked my happiness, and in less than three minutes, having, with the courage of a lion, called the “box-keeper” to open the door, found myself seated close beside *her*, whom of all women breathing I now the most admired.

“I am so delighted,” said she, “to have found you here. I have sent after you a hundred times, but you have changed your house, and I did not know where in the world to send a note to beg of you to come to me this evening after the Opera. I have a few people coming—all pleasant too—I can’t endure

bores—and I was saying to Catherine—my sister—I believe, Mr. Gurney, you know my sister?”

We both bowed.

“I was saying to Catherine, I would give the world to know how we could get hold of you.”

“You are too kind,” said I, “and I too fortunate.”

“We have heard of all your exploits,” said the girl:—“Why you are a perfect knight-errant in these degenerate days.”

I wished the exploit at old scratch, and dreaded lest the description might turn upon the cause of my meeting with Daly. I made a sort of acknowledgment for the compliment, but said nothing.

“I think, Catherine,” continued my most agreeable friend, “we had better keep him, now we *have* got him; there’s plenty of room in the carriage, and we will undertake to carry you off with us.”

I was of course beyond measure happy; and

although my felicity was occasionally interrupted by visits of sundry very fine gentlemen, of the class since called dandies, of different ages and sizes, who, as I had seen upon former occasions, dropped in and bowed out of the box during the evening, upon the whole I was very well satisfied with the state of affairs.

The opera and ballet over, Mrs. Fletcher Green commissioned me to get up her carriage. I obeyed, scarcely knowing what I was doing, and in due course of time found myself with Mrs. Fletcher Green on one arm, and my intended sister-in-law, Miss Catherine Carter, on the other.

How different were my sensations then, to those which I endured, when restrained by the sense of another engagement, and I believe by my own shyness, from joining the same people in the same place so short a time before.

Two such charming creatures I never yet had fallen in with, and whatever impressions had been made upon me while seeing her only like

a bright star in other spheres, it was heightened into perfect ecstasy when I saw Mrs. Fletcher Green "at home."

Her house, to which we rapidly drove, at whose door I had often been, but whose threshold I had never yet crossed—often since have I passed it, full of recollections—was near Hyde Park. A suite of charming rooms, charmingly fitted up, received us; there were flowers, and drawings, and books, and lutes, and flutes, pianofortes, harps, guitars, a little fat spaniel, and a large parrot, and boxes, and bags, and ottomans, and sofas, and low chairs, and long chairs, and easy chairs; and in the middle stood a table affectedly covered with a table-cloth, on which were tea-cups, and tea-pots, and fruits, and wines, and fowls, and all sorts of things; for the demolition of which some of the party had already arrived.

"Is not mine a dear nice comfortable home?" said Mrs. Fletcher Green, taking my hand kindly and hospitably; "now we have shown you the way here—I shall say no more—people

I am fond of, are sure to find me delighted to see them."

"Yes," added Catherine, who was as fresh and as wild as a mountain roe, with thick curling hair, and eyes like a gazelle, "I'm sure you'll like us when you know us better; there is such a thing as sympathy in the world, and *we* like *you*."

"Fascinating creatures!" thought I.

The room began to fill with the *élite* of Mrs. Fletcher Green's friends who were still in town;—peers, poets, painters, a quondam cabinet minister or two, (I believe a bishop, but to *that*, at this distance of time, I will not swear,) and some odiously interesting foreigners, who were so exceedingly free and easy in their addresses to my admirable widow, that they kept me in a perpetual *feveret*, formed the groupe, adorned and sanctified by the presence of some lovely women, whose names I need not mention; beautiful mothers with lovely daughters; young wives without their husbands; young husbands without their

wives ; in short, it was all fascination, and when a few glasses of sillery, *bien frappé*—the night was *so* hot—had overcome the diffidence I felt at my sudden augmentation of acquaintance, I became gay and happy. How could I be otherwise ? Mrs. Fletcher Green had placed me next her, and I found my conversation grow extremely effective, until I could see, by the expressions of various countenances, that I was becoming rather popular ; a conclusion to which I was most specially drawn by the fact that an old lady,—the only speck upon the scene,—who had never moved a muscle of her face, since her arrival, nor opened her mouth except to put some grapes into it, at the end of one of my observations upon things in general, which created a laugh, lifted her glass to her eye and looked towards me. This proved that I was at least worth looking at ; nevertheless, it was clear, that she did not like what she saw, for she dropped the glass she had in her hand after a momentary glance, and betook herself to another, and more congenial glass which stood beside her.

Catherine went to the piano-forte, a Lady Caroline somebody followed her, and a quiet, gentlemanly man, who, like the old lady, had as yet said nothing, followed Lady Caroline. I could not make out why my charming widow had asked him. I now found out he was good for singing; and these three sang—and nothing was more popular in those times—Moore's "O Lady fair." Moore, too, was present himself, and his eyes sparkled with pleasure as the beautiful harmony swelled upon his ear; and he presently exhibited his gratitude by singing for the first time he ever sang it, I believe, to others, "Love's young dream." I had never heard him before. I never heard anything so beautiful. Without much voice, he expressed the feelings and sentiments he had himself embodied, with a tenderness and sweetness as indescribable now, as they were then incomparable.

And so wore on the night, until the night at last was quite worn out. Mrs. Fletcher Green had been more delightful than ever: she talked of love,—aye, of widows' love, too,—in reference, as she professed, to a very beautiful

widow who was present; but, inexperienced as I was at that period, I could not but comprehend the true bearing of my fair friend's hypotheses;—indeed, she did not seem very anxious to conceal her real meaning; and when eventually the joyous party broke up, her last words were, “Remember, Mr. Gurney, what I said about the widow;—faint heart never won fair lady.”

It was a beautiful morning when I left her door. London stood bright and smokeless; the streets which, in the noon of day, crowded with passengers, look long and foggy, now cleared of the countless living objects which then throng them, seemed shortened to the sight. There was a freshness in the air as the breeze blew on my face, which was burning, and I felt my young heart beat with satisfaction at the recollection of the occurrences of the last few hours. It was evident that the widow, if I chose it, was my own. I admit that her gaiety of manner, and liveliness of conversation were not observable, particularly with regard to myself: she was gay, and lively, and kind, and agreeable to all; yet

she selected *me* to be next her,—she talked, too, to *me* of love,—spoke of the happiness of married life,—expressed her belief that the beautiful widow to whom I have just alluded would marry again. Now all this, considering she was a beautiful widow herself, seemed something to build my hopes upon.

Seven thousand pounds per annum in money and estates was what Daly said she had brought her husband. There were no children left. That sum must, as I fancied, of course, still be her own: with seven thousand a-year in addition to my own four hundred and ninety, I could do something.—As the joke goes of the naval lieutenant at Portsmouth, it was clear that if I had been bred to the law, the law would never have been bread to me, and as I stood in the world, it seemed as if this was a most critical period of my life.

I had lost Emma Haines—if, as I had previously argued, it may be called a loss—not to possess what one never had gained. Here were no contingencies—no mother's frowns—no guar-

dian's suggestions—no—the thing was all her own.

I would not have married an Empress but for herself; yet as I before argued, the woman is delightful,—she would be delightful if she were penniless;—the fortune does not deteriorate from her attractions,—a gold frame sets off a good picture, although it only exposes the faults of a bad one. I'll have her.

I recollect saying these words—aye, as well as if it were but yesterday—just as I was crossing Bond-street, from Bruton-street to Conduit-street. “Faint heart never won fair lady.” So *she* said; and so *I* say,—No clever woman ever says anything without meaning something. “The iron is hot, I'll strike,—the sun shines, I'll make my hay,—to-morrow shall decide the question.”

And so it did, as shall be forthwith shown.

After a restless prostration of body for some hours, I rose feverish, and certainly not refreshed, to breakfast. I had not slept; for who can sleep when the heart and mind are so

actively engaged in anticipations such as those in which I now indulged? I breakfasted,—that is, I ate some tasteless toast, and drank some equally tasteless tea: everything of this world, worldly, was secondary to the one great object in my view. Nevertheless, I went to church—St. George's, Hanover-square—and I believe I was as devout as my neighbours; for, strange as it may seem, I think, (at least I did *then*,) perhaps uncharitably, that one half of the best bred congregations go to church to look at the other half; and that, while the lips are mechanically repeating the responses, the eyes are travelling strangely to the right and to the left. If it be not so even now, how can we account for the accuracy with which the devout church-goer comes home to luncheon full of the minutest particulars of the dress, position, and conduct of the rest of the “gathered together?” And yet, such is the advantage of external show, and such the value of appearances, that being only a regular church-goer gives the hypocritical sinner a tenfold advantage in society

over the infinitely more innocent individual, who is not so constant in his attendance on divine service, but whose heart is perhaps more often communing with his God.

Upon the occasion to which I refer, I remember perfectly well that I was most particularly attentive. I felt that I was about to incur a heavy responsibility, and all that I can charge myself with in the way of irregularity of proceeding was, as I take it, much to my credit. When the psalms were given out I did not catch the number, and not wishing to seem less versed in what was going on than my neighbours, I opened my prayer-book, not where other people had opened theirs, but at the service of matrimony, which, upon that particular day, appeared seriously interesting to me ;—I say seriously, for I honestly confess the obligations therein imposed, appear to me to be of a much more important and solemn character than the generality of people who plight their faith at the altar seem to consider them.

The sermon was—at least I thought so—

a very long one,—the matter not attractive, —the manner of the preacher even less so; and I admit that, when he concluded, I felt more pleased than I ought to have felt, and that my pleasure was not of that particular character which it ought to have been at the conclusion of such an appeal.

I was again in the street,—again my thoughts reverted to the great enterprise of the day. “To be, or not to be,” that *was* the question. Sunday too,—the better day the better deed. I felt an impulse.—As the Quakers say, “the spirit moved me.” Such a woman might be snapped up; opportunities like this did not occur every hour. It was decided—and accordingly I slackened my pace, in order to give her time to compose herself after her return from church, and to catch her, before people dropped in, as seemed to be the custom of her house, to luncheon.

I was embarked on a new venture—trying a new style of address—I had certainly been lucky in some other cases; and although, in

that of Miss Haines, I had laboured under a mistake, as she said, or she had inconsiderately admitted a preference, which she had afterwards felt it prudent or agreeable to disclaim, still even *she* was not the only being to whom I had been devoted.

In my first and earliest love-affair, although as in the last, I was not entirely successful, inasmuch as circumstances prevented my reaping the happiness which I might have enjoyed under a more favourable conjuncture—I had won a heart—a young, a gentle, timid, beating heart, which, perhaps, had never throbbed before I set it in motion—in my own opinion it never throbbed afterwards in the same way—but here I was to make my advances upon a clever, experienced, worldly woman, whose younger sister seemed very much to resemble in character and description the amiable girl who first possessed my affections; and I wavered a little even on the edge of my coming declaration, as to whether I should adopt the younger and discard the elder lady. The consciousness that

the latter had exhibited infinitely more kindness and consideration towards me than the former, decided me. Yet, still I lingered about the streets, cold, nervous, sick—if she refused me, I should, as Emma very wisely had said about *me* upon the late occasion, be shut out of her agreeable society—perhaps not—friendship might still be left for us. I could almost hear my heart beat as I turned up Brook-street in my way to her house—but then “faint heart never won fair lady”—and so, it *was* to be; and so I knocked as boldly as I could at the door—it was opened—Mrs. Fletcher Green was at home—and in five minutes I was in the dear boudoir, with the adorable creature herself—but Catherine was there too: and beside her, a guardsman, whose name I forget, and a Count something, whose name ended in Sko, or Sky, as Counts’ names very often do.

It was now evident to me that Miss Carter must be a fortune as well as her sister, for the Count was unremitting in his attentions to her;

the Captain rather devoted himself to our hostess; but again she exhibited her preference for me, and again made me sit next her during luncheon, which was protracted, by agreeable conversation, until nearly four o'clock. I began now to be anxious for my opportunity—I began, moreover, to fear that it would not offer, but at last the assiduous Count made a move, and promising to meet the ladies afterwards in the park, retired.

“Mr. Gurney,” said Mrs. Fletcher Green, “if you have nothing better to do, dine here to day—we shall not be more than half-a-dozen.”

“Do,” said Catherine.

What could I say?

“Will *you*, Captain Lark?”

“Too happy,” said the gallant Captain.

“If you mean to ride, Catherine,” said Mrs. Fletcher Green, “it is time to get ready. It takes her at least an hour to prepare herself for horseback.”

“Ten minutes, you mean,” said Catherine;

“however, I will go, and leave you to the beaux.”

“I must run away,” said the Captain.

I wish you would, thought I.

“Well then, I shall leave my sister to the special care and protection of Mr. Gurney,” said Catherine.

“You are too obliging, Kate,” said Mrs. Fletcher Green, with a look which convinced me that, although she meant her observation to sound ironical, she really felt herself very much obliged to her for retiring.

“Adieu till dinner-time,” said the Captain, and away went he, in company with the fascinating Kate; she to dress, and he to ride.

The period had now arrived—the moment to which I had so long looked forward was at hand. Mrs. Fletcher Green seemed to me to be instantaneously aware of my awkwardness; she seated herself on a sofa, and made a sort of sign which I could not but construe into an invitation to sit beside her; there was a lurking devil in her eye—I saw that she already

anticipated the course I was about to pursue—I felt conscious that I had betrayed myself—but I could not immediately begin a conversation likely to lead directly to *the* point—a momentary silence therefore ensued—she saved me a world of trouble, and relieved me from all my embarrassment.

“Well,” said she, “did you dream of the beautiful widow last night?”

“I should not like to confess my dreams,” said I;—“at all events to *you*.”

“What! do you think I should turn evidence against you, and show you up to Lady Harriet?” said my fair companion.

“I certainly did not dream of *her*,” said I.

“I am afraid, then,” replied Mrs. Fletcher Green, “that you are not very susceptible—she is lovely—and I could tell you something that might please you; to be sure it might spoil you, for men’s heads are very easily turned.”

“I admit that,” said I, “but I do not exactly think your house the most favourable sphere for Lady Harriet’s display.”

“Why!” exclaimed she, “what has my poor dear darling house done to merit your disapprobation?”

“Nothing,” said I. “But when *you* are in it, it seems almost as presumptuous, as I am sure it is unwise, for pretenders to admiration to come within its circle.”

“What!” said my fair friend, “do you really think *me* so very agreeable? Upon my word, you do me the greatest possible honour; but I am not blind—you cannot compare me with Lady Harriet—she is younger than I am—and, as for person, she is lovely.”

“Granted,” said I; “but where is the intellect to illuminate those regularly formed features of her’s—where is the mind to animate the eyes—where the intellect to captivate—where, in short, are all those charms ——?”

“Which I,” interrupted Mrs. Fletcher Green, “possess in such abundance.”

“You have saved me the trouble of finishing my sentence,” said I.

“Oh! you must know,” said Mrs. Fletcher

Green, "that I am quite aware of all my own perfections. It would be the height of affectation in me not to feel and to know, that I am tolerable enough—that I am good-natured, high-spirited, and love fun to my heart; but it would be the extreme of folly in *me* to suppose that I resembled Lady Harriet in any of those attractions which place her in the first rank of our leading beauties."

"Undeceive yourself," said I, warming with my subject, "there is not a human being on the face of the earth, who could for a moment hesitate in a decision on that point."

"How agreeable," said Mrs. Fletcher Green, "it would be if a woman could but bring herself to believe all the pretty things men say to her. I dare say, the moment you leave this house, you will go to some of your friends, whom I don't know, and show up me and Kate for two mad women, full of flightiness and folly, and, in the ordinary course of worldly proceedings, turn up your hands and eyes, and wonder how two silly creatures

at our time of life can make such fools of ourselves."

"You do me the greatest injustice," said I.

"Perhaps I do," said my fair hostess; "but I do not do the world generally injustice. I tell you mirth and laughing are my delight—I get together all the pleasant people I can—I make my house agreeable—I select those who like to meet each other—I never permit any serious discussion or grave debate. What you saw last night is a fair specimen of our living; and yet I am quite aware that this, which is innocence itself, and has only the demerit of being a little unlike the ordinary run of humdrum society, gives vast umbrage to some of the ultra stiff prudes and sages, who, when they see other people happy, shake their old empty heads and croak out—‘Ah, something bad will come of it!’"

"Do not, pray, class me amongst the empty headed," said I. "You have opened Elysium to me, and I am but too happy; although, perhaps, that very happiness may lead to misery."

“There,” exclaimed Mrs. Green, “that’s it. You are like the odious frumps I have just been talking of—‘something bad will come of it.’”

“Not bad,” said I, hesitatingly, “but to *me*, perhaps, much wretchedness.”

“My dear Mr. Gurney,” said Mrs. Fletcher Green, “what can you mean—wretchedness to *you*?”

“Yes; to be shown a gleam of such happiness, only to be excluded from it eternally.”

“Why,” said the lady, “who is going to exclude you?—you are as welcome as flowers in May. Kate and I have made up our minds to be extremely fond of you; and we have resolved to make you one of our most obedient and faithful knights.”

“There *are* circumstances,” said I “which qualify the brightest pleasures—a dread of something—an apprehension—I feel myself unable to explain my meaning—I dare not—but—you will forgive me—your manner to me has been so kind—perhaps, too kind—that my whole

heart and soul are enchained by the fascinations which surround me—conscious, too, I am of my own demerits—I dare not venture to say all I feel.”

Here I was overcome by my feelings, which were ardent and sincere. I looked at my Amelia—I thought of her at that moment by her Christian name—there was an indescribable softness and sweetness in the expression of her countenance—no frown—no pride—no resentment—it was a look—

“ More in sorrow than in anger.”

“ Good heavens, Mr. Gurney!” said she; “ what can you mean? I have too high an opinion of you to suppose that you mean either to insult or laugh at me. Your conduct is a most cutting satire upon my behaviour to you. You are like the rest of the world, or, at all events, like the rest of *mankind*. You attribute to motives and principles, unknown to innocent and mirthful hearts, actions the result of high spirits, and then venture to do that

which nothing upon earth but the height of imprudence upon my part, or the extreme of presumption on yours, could possibly account for."

"Calm yourself, dearest woman," said I. "You cannot so much mistake me. I may have erred—I may have presumed upon what I had flattered myself was your kind and delightful preference; but do you—can you imagine, presumptuous as I admit my declaration to be, that I can have any but the best, and purest and most honourable motives."

"You are a very extraordinary person," replied Mrs. Fletcher Green. "You admit a declaration, and talk of honourable motives. Why, my dear Mr. Gurney, if I could bring myself to believe you serious, I should attribute such conduct, coupled with such language, to madness."

"Is there," said I, "is there,—and pray hear me patiently, whatever may be the result,—is there anything like madness—except, perhaps, in having been betrayed into this con-

fession,—is there anything like madness in a devoted admiration of qualities, talents, virtues, and accomplishments like yours? My whole heart and soul, I repeat it, are devoted to you; and if the tenderest care and affection—if a life consecrated to you, can justify the appeal, assure yourself that no human being can be more ardent, more sincere, than I am in——”

“ In what?” exclaimed the lady, who appeared rather alarmed at my earnestness, and, who, withdrawing her hand, which I had clasped, added, really agitated, “ What *do* you mean?—what *can* you mean?”

“ Recollect,” said I, “ dearest woman, your axiom of last night as to faint hearts. You have made me bold; do not make me entirely wretched.”

“ Good heavens ! are you in your senses ?” said Mrs. Fletcher Green.

“ Perfectly,” replied I. “ All I seek on earth is a return of that feeling which you have inspired. To plight my faith at the altar—to vow eternal fidelity—to pledge my soul

to my affection—is the height of my ambition.”

The moment I had uttered these words, the look of astonishment and dismay which had characterized her countenance disappeared; a totally different expression illumined her features; I saw my advantage. Judge my delight when my fair companion took my hand in her's, and said in a tone of exquisite sweetness, “Are you in earnest, Mr. Gurney? Am I to attribute to such an honourable sentiment, and such a desperate resolution, the conversation which has just passed between us?”

“Indeed, indeed you may,” said I. “Only let me have the permission to hope from your sweet lips, and my happiness is complete.”

“My dear Mr. Gurney,” said Mrs. Fletcher Green, with one of her sweetest looks, her bright eyes twinkling like stars—“my dear Mr. Gurney, what can I say?”

And at this particular juncture the door opened, and Miss Kitty Carter appeared, habited for her ride.

I never wished a pretty girl at Old Nick till that moment.

“What!” said Miss Kate, “you two here all this time! Upon my word, rather a lengthened *tête-à-tête*. I hope your conversation has been interesting.”

I hated her still more.

“It has, my dear Catherine,” said Mrs. Green—I wondered whether she would tell her before my face what we had been talking about,—“and it has excited me very much; and, at all events, shown me the necessity of taking one step which I had hitherto omitted to take.”

This step I anticipated was ordering me out of the house; but I was mistaken. I confess I thought that my fair Amelia appeared to be struggling hard to conceal a laugh, and *that* I considered rather as a display of want of feeling; yet she certainly was struggling. Perhaps I was wrong in my judgment. And while I was debating as to what I ought to do, having just worked up to the very *dénouement* of my affair, she turned to me, after having made a

signal to her sister, no doubt perfectly understood by *her*,—every family has its private code,—and said, with as much composure as if nothing whatever had occurred, “I must leave you *now*; but remember you dine with us at seven.”

I bowed—blushed up to the eyes—she shook hands with me—the result was evident—I was accepted. Upon the strength of this encouragement, I shook hands sociably with Kate, and bounded rather than walked down the stairs, and so, forth into the street.

It is true I would have much rather that the fair rider had been quite as long habiting herself as her sister said she would be, so that I might have concluded my treaty, and signed and sealed it on the lips of my dearest Amelia. I had a strong notion at that time of signing and sealing—however, the last shake of the hand was enough. The not showing me up to her sister, too, was conclusive. She was not angry,—no, not she; it was, in fact, a settled thing. Never was man so happy, so elated.

Wit, beauty, accomplishments, seven thousand a-year, and a delightful sister-in-law to break the *toujours perdrixism* of a matrimonial *tête-à-tête*,—all this, and a fine place in the country, horses, hounds, battues, archeries, races, *fêtes*, *soirées dansantes*, and *déjeûners dinatoires* ;—what a vision ! Should not I be popular ?—should not I be a star of the first magnitude with such a wife, so well known in the gay and learned world, without one bit of the Prussic acid of bluisism about herself ? Harps, honeysuckles, nectar, love, ecstasy, champagne, bowers, flowers, music, painting,—all—everything. Gold cornices, ten-guinea boot-jacks, and every other necessary of life could be afforded with seven thousand pounds a-year ; at least, so I thought then ; having only, at that period of my existence, as I have before observed, four hundred and ninety pounds per annum—just enough to find a moderately well-dressing man in shoe-strings.

How the hours seemed to crawl from four until seven ! Absorbed in a dream of delight,

I lay on my sofa, and conjured up the events of the evening,—Captain Lark dying of envy ; Count Sko Sky, or whatever it was, in an agony of despair ; and I, handing my Amelia to table, sitting next her whispering soft things, and looking still softer ones. “ Remember seven !” said my Amelia, with a witchery more impressive than the “ Remember twelve !” of the illustrious Siddons. I never was quite so near being mad as during those three hours : but, as the Italian proverb says, “ *Non vien di che non venga sera ;*” and at length seven o’clock came.

I flattered myself, although no beauty, that I had made the best of myself. My neckcloth was a pattern ; my hair assiduously curled ; and my coat, of Stultz’s best, displayed, with an under-waistcoat of cerulean blue,—I speak of years in which the more recent splendour of the outer waistcoat was unknown ;—and thus elated, I proceeded to the scene of my past triumph and my future glory. The very servants in the hall seemed to have obtained

information of the result of my assault of the forenoon. I was received with marked attention, deference, and civility; and ushered into the drawing-room; where I found Lark, the Count, Lord Somebody, whose name I could not make out, and a learned philosopher, who had been invited, not more for his own merits than because it was pleasant to a very agreeable lady, who was also present, to meet him; a young, awkward cousin of my Amelia's, just from Eton, was the sixth of the party, besides myself; neither our fair hostess nor her sister having yet made their appearance.

We stood about the room looking at each other as if we could gladly have cut each other's throats, Lark and the Count remaining aloof and talking apart, the philosopher flirting with the blue lady, and the lord and the lout appearing not to be conscious that I was made of the same materials as themselves. It was a painful quarter of an hour, broken only by the arrival of a Mr. Flanneky, a red-faced gentle-

man from the Sister Island, with powder and brass buttons, looking very much like a second or third-rate butler—what part of the play he was to act I did not exactly know, but I very soon determined, let his province be what it might, that he should have his *congé* within ten days of my accession to the throne of that establishment.

At length my darling woman appeared, and with her, Catherine. Her presence, like that of the sun, diffused a genial warmth around—everybody seemed animated at her approach, and I said to myself, “How delightful it will be, when I call this creature my own, to see her adorning and delighting every circle of which she will be the centre !”

“Well, Mr. Gurney,” said the fascinating woman, “how is your head?”

“Oh,” said Miss Carter, “upon my word it is not fair to worry him with questions after that long *tête-à-tête*. What do you think, Lord Melancourt? My sister and Mr. Gurney were actually closeted three quarters of an hour

to-day ; and do what I will, I cannot get her to tell me what the subject of their conversation was, and in general she is the most candid creature alive."

His Lordship made a sort of unintelligible noise, without moving a muscle of his face, and looked at me as if I had been a pickpocket. I felt annoyed and gratified—gratified that Amelia had not confided our conversation to her sister, and annoyed at the playfulness of manner in which she inquired after my head.

Dinner was announced. Of course Lord Melancourt took Mrs. Green—I wished him anywhere but where he was ; the Sko Sky count took the blue lady who had rank ; the philosopher took Catherine ; and Lark, the lout, and I, brought up the rear—Mr. Flanneky bowing to me as I motioned him to go forward, with a whispered " Oh no, I am at home." Are you ? thought I ; then make the most of it, for if you make this your home this day three months, I'll eat you. I never saw such an odious mulberry-faced animal in my life ; he

seemed to me as ugly as Lucifer, and as old as Methuselah—I believe, from what I have since heard, he was then a fine florid gentleman of about five-and-forty, and I was four-and-twenty—*voilà la différence*.

Mr. Flanneky took the bottom of the table; Lord Melancourt the top, having my Amelia on one side of him, and the blue on the other; Kate, was separated from me by Lark, so that between him and my aversion, the croupier, was I posted—seeing Paradise, and feeling something quite unlike it. I never passed two more unpleasant hours in my life. I kept my eyes fixed on my beloved widow, and once or twice caught a responsive glance, but I did not half like her manner to the viscount—it was clear they were old acquaintances; they used conventional jokes, and made references to other days, and to events of which I was ignorant. The blue lady began to lecture on chemistry, and the learned professor descanted much upon certain affinities and combinations which, with a head full of affinities and combi-

nations of a very different nature, did not in the slightest degree interest me. Indeed I was so tormented by what appeared to me Amelia's inconsiderate conduct, that I rejoiced rather than regretted when the ladies retired.

The after-dinner conversation was flat; the Count entertained us with a history of his various houses in different parts of Europe—the professor drew his chair near Mr. Flanneky's, and conversed in an under tone of voice—the lout went away, and the lord went to sleep; and much after this fashion did we dissipate another hour, when we repaired to the drawing-room. Here we found several “refreshers,” and the party began to assume a liveliness which it did not before possess; but to me its increase was of no avail, for Mrs. Fletcher Green was so occupied with her different female visitors that I could not get an opportunity of saying a word to her confidentially; she however rallied my spirits, by coming up to me and bidding me stay, for there would be a *Thé* and some music, late. This was balm to my

wounds, and I fell into conversation with Captain Lark, who was really an agreeable person, and who appeared more amiable to *me* upon that occasion from not having apparently any design either upon Amelia or Catherine.

Things went on in this way till about eleven o'clock, when a gentleman past the middle age made his appearance in the drawing-room, whom I had never seen before: he seemed to know everybody, and everybody seemed to know him—he was in a morning dress, and had evidently just arrived from a journey. I did not half like his manner, either to Amelia or Catherine; he had a free and easy way of speaking, which sounded extremely unpleasant to my ears, and the sort of swaggering command he appeared to assume, perfectly disgusted me. He made no apology for appearing in boots; called Miss Carter, “Kitty,” as if he were upon the best terms not only with himself but her; and then, without asking Mrs. Fletcher Green’s permission, rang the bell, and when a servant appeared, told him to order something

to eat, to be laid in the dinner-room, as he had not dined, and was “ infernally hungry.”

I availed myself of the earliest opportunity of making inquiries as to this self-important gentleman at the fountain-head; and indeed I intended to let Amelia see, without displaying any very violent symptoms either of jealousy or bad temper, that I did not quite like this coarse man’s familiarity.

“ Pray,” said I, stopping her, as she was passing into the other room, “ who may your free and easy friend in the boots be ? ”

“ Mercy on me ! ” said Amelia, “ that’s just it,”—this was a favourite phrase of her’s,—“ now I can account for it all—don’t you know ?——”

“ Not I, upon my word,” said I.

“ I have been very remiss, then,” replied she ; “ come, let me introduce you to him—he is an excellent creature—a little tired now, and perhaps not in the best humour; however, he will, I am sure, be delighted to make your acquaintance.”

“ Yes,” said I, “ but do you know, I am not quite so sure that I am equally anxious to make his.”

“ Oh, fie, Mr. Gurney !” said Catherine, who was standing close by ; “ why, Amelia will murder you !”

We had sidled forwards to the chair in which the respectable gentleman had ensconced himself, and stood before him.

“ Fletcher, dear,” said my Amelia, “ this is Mr. Gurney, a most agreeable acquaintance we have made since you left town. Mr. Gurney—my husband.”

Now I only put it to any human being just to imagine what my feelings were at this moment. It would have been mercy in anybody to have killed me instantly. I could have cried out as Patkul did in his last agonies—“ Will nobody cut off my head ?” In the morning I had opened my heart to the beautiful widow—had, as I fancied, been accepted ; and here, in the evening, was presented to her great fat living husband. The folly, the stupidity of which I

had been guilty!—yet I had never seen the man—I had never heard his name mentioned. I concluded there was no Fletcher Green. Daly never told me there was a husband—not a soul ever referred to him. Mrs. Fletcher always talked of *her* house, and *her* horses, and said, Will you come and see *me*? It seemed they were ill matched—he lived much in the country—his pursuits were diametrically opposite to her's—they never interfered, and very seldom met, although when they did, they were on the best possible terms—but how should I know *that*? and then how singularly applicable were her conversations about widows and faint hearts!—— I bowed, and stammered out something—the *coup de grace* was only wanting. Mrs. Fletcher Green gave it with one of her sweetest smiles—

“Perhaps you will come here to luncheon to-morrow, Mr. Gurney, and improve your acquaintance with Fletcher?”

She saw the shot had told—the kindness of her heart overcame her love of mischief—and withdrawing me for a moment, she said—

“Forgive me for not having explained all this before. It is somewhat a severe reflection upon me that you should have heard so little of my husband as to have fallen into the mistake of this morning—forget it altogether—assure yourself I appreciate your good opinion. I have not breathed a syllable to Catherine, for both our sakes. It is useless talking of what *might* be, and which *cannot* be. Do, in kindness and sincerity, be what you *may*, and what I am sure you *will* be,—my friend. Now let us see if the *Thé* is ready; and mind you are in good spirits—else I shall think you are offended with me, and, what would be still more painful, that you think ill of me.”

I could make no answer to this soothing speech, and suffered her to lead me like a child to the table, where some of the laughing guests were already seated. All the rest of the affair was chaos. I heard sounds, but understood nothing; and, despite of my kind hostess's encouraging speeches, got away as soon as I possibly could. Of Mr. Fletcher Green I saw

no more that night; and as to Mrs. Fletcher Green, agreeable and delightful as she was, I never had courage or spirits to see her again after I quitted her charming house, about one o'clock in the morning.

CHAPTER V.

ANY attempt to describe the sensations under which I laboured, when after a feverish restless night, I arose from my bed the morning after this incident, would be utterly vain and useless. It seemed to me, that I was destined to become the sport of fate, and as if the punishment for all my sins were to be inflicted by the hands of those dear creatures to whom my very heart and soul were devoted.

It is true that Mrs. Fletcher Green not only forgave my fault, but extenuated my folly; and, with all her native sweetness, bade me forget my error, seeming really not ill pleased with the motive which had led to the indiscretion; but the more I considered the matter, the more

thoroughly did I consider that I could not meet her again—or, if ever such an event could by any possibility take place, Time, the *edax rerum*, the soother of sorrows, and the polisher off of sharp edges which every where present themselves in one's career through life, must lend his aid to the re-union; and so, London being thin, and the chance of my meeting my imaginary widow, perhaps with her living husband, determined me upon removing myself forthwith from the attenuated metropolis.

My inclinations pointed to the Isle of Wight, as a fitting retreat under my misfortunes. I felt somehow that the insular character of that terrestrial paradise afforded a fancied security from the inroads of London friends. For, although I hoped that nobody—Hull, perhaps, excepted—would know anything of my misadventure, it was impossible for me to disburthen my mind from the apprehension that something might transpire in the course of time, which would render me obnoxious to the remarks of what is called society, and that

I might become the butt of the lampooner, or the original of the caricaturist. Off I resolved upon going, and accordingly booked myself for Southampton, directing my servant to follow with my gig and saddle horse, so that I might range at liberty over the *ultima thule* of Great Britain, and endeavour, by change of scene and society, to get rid of the last great blunder of my existence; which, as it was purely my own, seemed more important in my eyes than the indiscretion which I had so recently before committed, in confiding the conduct of my amour with Miss Haines to Mr. Daly.

I chose the Southampton road in preference to that, which as I first proposed going to Ryde, would have been the nearer. I liked Ryde for its rurality, but I apprehend, if an extended pier should be built, and a constant communication established by steam-boats—a favourite vision just at this time—it will, in a few years, be totally spoiled. New streets will run where meadows spread their verdant carpets, and country villas and lodging-houses usurp the ground where

gardens bloom; till at last, row will rise above row, and place above place, until the now nice quiet village will present to the eye a glare of yellow roads and red buildings arrayed on the side of the hill, so as to give an effect at a distance very much like that produced by the perspective of a china plate. However, as it is likely to last my time, I continue my affection for it, and should certainly have taken the Portsmouth road, but for an incident which occurred to me only a few months' before, and which induced me to steer clear of that gay and animated sea-port, than which, in war time, nothing could be much more lively.

That incident ought not to be omitted in my collection of adventures :—

It happened that some years before the period of which I am now treating, I had been staying in the neighbourhood of Alverstoke with some delightful people; indeed, I had so far prolonged my stay, that my poor mother, who was then alive, was—with her usual sensitive anxiety for my matrimonial prospects—

most solicitous to ascertain whether I had not been fascinated by the bright eyes of some Hampshire belle. But no—our pursuits were infinitely less sentimental; and the earnest entreaties of my kind-hearted excellent host and his charming wife to stay, needed nothing more to make them successful than the continued round of gaiety and merriment which we derived—if not from trees and running brooks, most certainly from passing events in the neighbourhood. The days flew rapidly, and six weeks, I believe, slipped through my fingers almost imperceptibly. However, at length, I felt it absolutely necessary to tear myself away, and seized the opportunity when they had accepted an engagement to a neighbouring family; and having shaken hands with both of them, promising speedily to return, I quitted their hospitable roof.

It was with no small degree of pain I left them, nor were the weather and time of the year at all calculated to diminish the misery of leaving a snuggerly such as theirs; however, my time had arrived, and I was to depart; and as I

wished, for many reasons, to be perfectly independent in my proceedings, I dispatched my servant with my heavy luggage per morning coach, reserving for myself merely a portmanteau, a *sac de nuit*, and a dressing-case; and having made these arrangements, at five o'clock in a misty, windy, wet and odious November afternoon, stepped into mine host's carriage, which was to convey me from his residence to the landing, or rather, in my case, the embarking point at Gosport, whence I, bag, cloak, dressing-case, and all, were to be ferried across to Portsmouth; the carriage being to return from the ferry, to take him and his amiable wife to a dinner-party in their neighbourhood, their engagement at which induced me to terminate my visit to them that evening, rather than on the morning of the following day.

All that had been projected in the programme was duly put into execution, up to my departure per ferry-boat for Portsmouth. A short delay on the part of the boatmen, and a delicacy on mine in keeping my friend's carriage

so long as possibly to delay his subsequent departure for his engagement, left me shivering and shaking for some minutes on the Gosport shore, in company with my portmanteau, bag, and dressing-case. At length, however, since, according to the ancient saw, time and patience overcome all difficulties, I and my accessories were afloat; and after ten minutes' drenching in the heaviest rain I ever suffered under, I did what was extremely satisfactory to myself, "come to the Point;" where upon landing, I was assailed by various porters and others, who proffered their services to carry my never-to-be-forgotten portmanteau, bag, and dressing-case to any ostelry or lodging I might choose to select in the gay, agreeable, and in war time crowded town of Portsmouth.

In those days the Crown was considered the "crack" inn; and therefore I, who having been sworn at Highgate, never drank small-beer when I could get strong, unless I preferred "swipes," proceeded forthwith to that extensive and well-conducted establishment: thither

I directed my nautical mercury to march, and thither I followed him. I reached the Crown—alive, and perhaps well; but in regard of drapery, dripping like a male Musidora. It was nearly dark; and the wind whistled *out* of the gaping gateway of the Inn right in my teeth. I pulled a bell—the sound seemed lost in the breeze; but having made a second effort, a pale-faced waiter made his appearance.

“ I want dinner, and a bed,” said I.

“ This way, Sir,” said he; and forthwith ushered me into what was called a coffee-room: in which, I beg to observe, both the chimney and the company were smoking. The floor was sanded like the bottom of a bird-cage, and probably for the same reason; and several gentlemen—so I considered them by their language—were grouped at narrow tables placed in little slips, separated from each other by brown partitions, at the top of which were fixed brass rods and red fustian curtains, like those by which, in a country church, the churchwardens’ pew is specially distinguished.

I was tired, wet, and weary ; and, above all, uncomfortable in my mind—I had left a house where comfort and hospitality reigned with unsubjected sway ; six weeks of social intercourse with a dear friend whom I loved, and his family whom I esteemed, had spoiled me for this sudden change to boisterous mirth, strange faces, and unsavoury smells. I sought to be alone, to live over again in thought the last forty days, and recal and record in my mind the pleasures and comforts I had experienced, while, as far as external objects were concerned, I might repose for a few hours, upon my recollections of the constant excitement in which my delightful *séjour* had kept me.

“ Can I have no sitting room ?” said I, drawing myself back from the door.

“ This is the coffee-room,” said the waiter, somewhat sulkily ; which I conclude, as a matter of technicality, he thought a cogent, legal, and constitutional reason for dining in it. “ I don’t *think*,” added he, looking first *at* my miserably dripping hat and cloak, and secondly, in vain

for my servant, and the proportionate luggage adequate to the wants and wishes of a gentleman who had the presumption to demur to dine by himself—"I don't *think*"—as if such a monster had any right to think—"that we *have* a sitting-room disengaged—I'll see—have you any luggage, Sir?"

It was quite clear to me, that upon my answer to this evidently leading question very much depended; and what had I to boast?—I have already said—a small portmanteau, a bag, and a dressing-case.

"The porter has got my luggage," said I—pulling up a limp, wet shirt collar, in order to look dignified.

And the waiter went to the porter, who still stood under the gateway—and he took my luggage—and they whispered together—and the pallid monster grinned contemptuously; and, when he turned away from the amphibious creature in the pea-jacket, and said "Chambermaid, take this gentleman's things to a bedroom," the look he gave, and the peculiar

emphasis which he placed upon the word *gentleman*, convinced me, that whatever my own opinion might be of Mr. Gilbert Gurney, the waiter at the Crown Inn at Portsmouth did not in any degree sympathize with me in my estimation of that highly respectable personage.

Having delivered my moveables to the chambermaid, the fellow went into some other room to inquire of the head of the establishment, who had not stirred, whether I might, by his special grace and favour, be permitted to put five or six shillings extra into his pocket, by the enjoyment of fire and candle in a room “to myself,” as the people say.

I then had an opportunity of surveying the chambermaid herself—Maid! thought I—Gorgon! It would not be more preposterous to call a patriarch, who at seventy-two shakes his tongs-like legs over the saddle of a post-horse—post-boy—than to call thee, maid! However, it was of no sort of use to disagree with her;—like Lord Grizzle, in Tom Thumb, when

declining the combat with the giantess, I felt, and almost said

“ I will not fight with thee !”

and accordingly, threw into my countenance an expression of urbanity, mingled with a desire to know what she was going to do with me.

“ Sally !” screamed the Brobdignagian, “ what bed-rooms is disengaged ?—a gentleman wants a bed !”

A face not less ugly than that of the questioner, presented itself over the balusters, resembling nothing I had ever seen except a full moon in a fog.

“ What gentleman ?” said the creature.

“ Comes by the Gosport ferry,” was the reply.

“ Oh !”—and, after a pause, “ there’s only number two hundred and eighteen.”

“ Up-stairs, if you please,” said my first conductress.

“ I’ll stop one moment,” said I, “ to see if I can have a room to dine in.”

“ Yes, Sir, you can,” said the waiter, “ I’ll shew it you now.”

And so he did; and shall I ever forget it?—it was a little room opening directly under the gate-way, three-cornered, like a cocked hat-box, half covered with a dirty carpet, which, as it was agitated by the wind drifting under the door, undulated like a playhouse sea.

What was this to me?—at *my* age it mattered little; and all the inns in England put together could not have yielded half the comforts I had left behind me on the other side of the water; so I gave an assenting nod, begged to have a fire lighted, and ordered a boot-jack; which, being brought, I found the task of “unbooting,” one of much greater difficulty than I had anticipated—those excellent and useful coverings for the legs had been saturated during my brief yet pelting voyage, and required a force to be withdrawn which I had not foreseen. The deed, however, was done; and, having installed my feet in a pair of most accommodating slippers, I ordered some fish, and a broiled fowl

with mushroom sauce, for dinner, and proceeded towards my dormitory, my six-feet Thais "leading the way."

We began to mount the stairs as the clock was striking six, and continued to ascend in nearly a perpendicular direction for a considerable time; we then seemed to take a south-westerly direction; and, shortly after, rose rapidly up a precipitous ladder, railed on either side, and reached that, which, when it was opened, appeared to me to be the lantern of a light-house. It was a pentagonal room, three sides of which were windows, on the fourth side stood a miserable-looking bed, and the fifth was the doorway. This was number two hundred and eighteen.

"Why," said I; "there is no fire-place here."

"No, Sir," said Thais, surveying me from

"Head to foot, from top to toe;"

"do you want a fire?—this is the only room we have—it's uncommon pleasant in the day time

—in clear weather you can see from the Nab to the Needles with the naked eye.”

The idea of anything naked in such a room at such a season made me shudder—all I said was, “I don’t think it particularly snug for this time of year.”

“There a’n’t no other room, Sir,” said my patroness: saying which, she banged down a rather tarnished tin candlestick upon a painted deal table which stood under one of the shutterless windows, and having deposited by its side one solitary towel, and a little hard lump of yellow soap, looking like a bit of bee’s wax, she disappeared, banging the door after her with a noise which made all the frames and panes of my winter conservatory rattle.

In this distant and desolate spot, I changed my dress, and although the climate was none of the mildest, I soon began to feel the comfort of dry clothing; and thus young in years, and buoyant in spirits, notwithstanding my various little discomfitures, the little ills by which I seemed to be encompassed became

matters of mirth, and when I sat myself down on the rickety chair which graced my narrow bed's side, I could not choose but laugh at my own miseries.

In some twenty or twenty-five minutes I had completed my toilette, and felt an anxious desire to find my refectory. Then came a new difficulty : I quitted my observatory, and to use the phrase of Messrs. Lunardi, Sadler, Green and Co., the aeronauts, " began to descend;" this was a matter of no great intricacy as far as the last topmost ladder was concerned, but when I got into what might fairly be called the House, seeing that there was no finger-post in the passages, I was puzzled, and compelled to proceed somewhat cautiously ; for nothing is more likely to lead a man into a scrape than turning into a wrong room at a house open for the reception of a general company.

Guided I suppose by the natural instinct for food with which every animal, biped or quadruped, is imbued, rather than by any knowledge of the *Carte du pays*, I reached what might be con-

sidered the habitable part of the Inn ; and at the end of a sort of corridor leading to the front rooms on the first floor, I encountered a group of pretty faces smiling—and when does a face look so sweetly as when it smiles on one?—and earnestly and intently looking at me ; one particularly seemed to regard me with the deepest interest, not unmixed with veneration, a tribute for which, at my time of life, I was not altogether prepared. I “ kept the even tenour of my way,” and encountered at the corner of the passage the huge Glumdalca who had chaperoned me to the light-house—she looked awe-struck, and glided by me with a curtesy so profound that she seemed to sink at least two feet into the floor as she passed me.

Onward I went, until I reached the head of a staircase, which by the manner in which the breeze was blowing upwards, I knew to be the one which led to the sty in which I was destined to be fed. Judge my surprise at being stopped on the first step, *ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute*, by a portly, well

powdered, gentlemanly looking man, with a blue coat, brass buttons, white waistcoat, and black unmentionables.

"This way, Sir," said the landlord, for it was he who spoke ; "this, Sir, if you please, is the way to *your* dinner room."

"No," said I, "I believe you mistake—*my* room is down-stairs, I——"

"I beg a thousand pardons," replied mine host, bowing to the ground, "I *did* mistake, Sir—but that is, I hope, rectified. This way—lights, here—lights—this way, Sir."

The door of a handsome apartment flew open, and I discovered before a blazing fire, such as would have entirely consumed and devoured my little three-cornered room under the gateway, a table covered with plate fit for the infallible Bishop of Rome. to take his solitary dinner at ; a huge couch had been dragged from its ordinary anchorage, to a position at right angles with the fire-place, and before it stood a sofa-table whereon lay sundry books, the day's newspaper from London, a silver inkstand, and

all the comfortable accessories to reading and writing.

“This is a better room than the other,” said I, with the confident air of a man who utters an incontrovertible truism.

“I thought, Sir,” said the landlord, bowing profoundly, “you might have letters to write—our post does not leave till late—I hope, Sir, you will find everything as comfortable as we can make it.”

“Thank you,” said I, “I dare say I shall do extremely well—let me have dinner as soon you can.”

“Instantly, Sir,” was the answer; and mine host disappeared.

True to his word, five minutes had scarcely elapsed ere he re-appeared, bearing in his hands a massive silver tureen of soup, which I had not ordered, but which he deposited upon the table, a train of waiters following, one bearing a silver soup plate, a second a ladle, a third a lemon, and a fourth something else.

“I ventured, Sir,” said the landlord, bowing

most reverentially, "to add the soup—His Highness the Stadtholder was pleased to approve of it very much, when his Highness was here."

With such authority for its excellence, what could I say?—nothing—I bowed assent and forgiveness to the landlord, who retired to a respectful distance, and under the undivided surveillance of himself and three most vigilant subalterns, who stood with their eyes rivetted on me, and all of whom I most earnestly wished at old Nick, I swallowed what appeared to me some extremely bad broth—very unlike anything I had ever tasted before and not at all like anything I ever wished to taste again. However, the assiduities of mine host were not so to be repaid, and when I had finished my task, I said, "Admirable soup, indeed."

I ordered some Madeira,—mine host himself vanished—I had scarcely compounded the fish-sauce, before, like Aladdin's genius, he stood again before me, holding in his hand a bottle of the wished-for wine. I was startled at the quantity, and explained that a pint would have been enough.

“Oh, Sir!” said my obsequious caterer, “it makes no difference how much you drink—it would be a pity to divide it—Gordon’s wine, Sir,—has been twice to the East Indies, and has been in *my* house fifteen years—I have but very little of it left. Fetch a glass here,” said he, in a loud, authoritative tone to one of the waiters; “allow me, Sir, to pour some out.”

I submitted to his overweening kindness, and felt quite relieved when he again took his departure to fetch with his own proper hands my broiled fowl, which I found to my surprise associated with two *entrées*, one of cutlets and the other a *fricandeau*, and moreover ushered in with an announcement from mine host that the time had been so short it was impossible to do more; but that he had ventured to add a couple of woodcocks by way of second course.

Thus *fetéd* I nearly sank under the attentions which were proffered, and which naturally produced an increased effect upon me, as affording so striking a contrast to the reception which awaited me on my first arrival. I hurried

through the ceremonies of dinner as fast as I could, and having got the room clear of the main body of my tormentors, a bottle of claret placed on the table—for in vain had I mentioned port, and proposed a pint—I began to think how I could dispose of the rest of the evening until bed-time, and accordingly inquired of one of the waiters who was still occupying himself in arranging the fire, if there was any play that night.

The answer was in the affirmative—Mr. Pope, of Covent Garden Theatre, acted Alexander the Great.

“At what time does it begin?” said I.

“It has begun, Sir,” said the man.

“Do you think,” said I, “that I should find room if I were to go, after I have finished my wine?”

“Oh, Sir!” said the man, with a look of confident security, “my master will of course take care that there shall be a place secured for *you*, Sir.”

This I thought particularly civil, because it

must be wholly disinterested. I thanked him, and said I would avail myself of his civility; and then, restored to a blissful state of repose, I sipped my claret, and drank, tacitly but warmly, the healths of the excellent friends whom I had left on the opposite shore; and thence my thoughts wandered along the chain of circumstances and events, with which I had been entangled, until I fell into a kind of reverie, whence I was aroused by the entrance of my ever active, always vigilant landlord, who, having first informed me that the waiter had mentioned my intention of visiting the theatre, added that he had himself been there and secured accommodation for me, with which he hoped I should be satisfied, and that whenever I should be pleased to go he would be in readiness to attend me.

I begged to assure him that such particular attention was by no means necessary, and that I knew Portsmouth sufficiently well to find my way from one part of High Street to another, without giving him so much trouble. This declaration

was received by my genius with, "Oh, Sir! you are *so* good;" and a smile, perfectly indescribable.

"By the way," said I, as he was leaving the room, "will you send somebody with a light—I must go to my room; or—" continued I, "perhaps you will let them bring me my gloves and handkerchief, which I have left on the table in number 218, I think."

"I beg your pardon, Sir," said mine host, "your sleeping room adjoins this—I believe there are lights already there—number 2."

Saying which he threw open the *battants*, and I followed him into an apartment abundantly stored with comforts and luxuries—two candles were burning on the dressing table, and hot water bubbled in kettles by the fire. Having inquired if I wished for any thing more, and having received a negative reply, he retired; and I having pulled on my boots, took my gloves and handkerchief, rang the bell to announce my approach, and walked down stairs.

At the bar a few persons were assembled,

evidently with one and the same object—to look at *me*, which they did with similar marks of respect and interest to those which had been exhibited by the spectators at the top of the staircase, before dinner; they seemed to hold their beards as I appeared, with the exception of one old lady, whom I distinctly heard say, “God bless him,” as I passed her. I still went on, and at the door found my landlord again, attended by two persons armed with lighted lanterns, who, as I quitted the threshold, moved forwards towards the playhouse, mine host himself walking a little in advance of me.

We reached the unpretending fane, and I found myself rapidly transported by a side door, and narrow carpeted passage into a remarkably comfortable private box, where I was safely deposited by my landlord, and a gentlemen, to me unknown, but who almost instantly returned, and bowing most respectfully, presented me with a bill of the play. I established myself snugly behind the trelliage blind, and enjoyed the excellent acting of Pope in peace and quietude.

There were sundry disturbances in the pit, and some junior naval officers had located themselves in one of the boxes up stairs over the stage with long four horse whips, with which at stated periods they performed certain evolutions perhaps not altogether calculated for the interior of a theatre, but which were to me particularly agreeable on account of their novelty.

When the play was over, I felt that I had had enough of pleasure for once, and did not stay to see the farce. Lucky indeed was it that I did not, as far as my lanthorn bearers were concerned, for when I quitted the house, there I found them at the door ready to light me back again—I could not choose but avail myself of their services, and in such state I reached mine inn.

As I went into the house I met in the passage two remarkably pretty girls, whose faces I recollected having seen at the top of the staircase, when I was descending from my sky-parlour to dinner. I was much struck by a sort of brilliancy of joyous expression in their

countenances, although I could not help thinking that they had done their good looks something like injustice, by wearing bright orange-coloured silk handkerchiefs over their shoulders. A momentary glance of mine eye, sufficed to suffuse the downy cheeks of one of them with blushes, and dropping a profound curtsy, her eyes cast down upon the floor, she looked as if she thought she had been too presumptuous, and shrank as it were, from the hall into the bar, in which movement she was followed by her, whom I imagined to be her sister.

In those days I was very abstemious; however a play always makes one thirsty, and tires one, and besides I had been cold and wet, and I was rather out of spirits, and so I dissipated in a glass of negus and a biscuit, and again fell into one of those waking dreams which are not unfrequently generated in the solitude of an inn, where, although the body resteth for an hour or so, the mind is all abroad. When I rang to announce my retirement to bed, no Glumdalca was to be seen; although

from one room to the other was but a step, in came a fair, small-featured, blue-eyed personage, with a forehead like snow, over which revelled a profusion of light hair. She held in her trembling hand a candlestick, the undulating motion of which betrayed her agitation. She, however, like her young mistresses, if mistresses they really were, wore in her cap an orange-coloured bow. I set down the prevalence of this fashion as the result of some recent election, in which orange had been the distinctive badge of one of the candidates. I bade the fair young creature good night, but she seemed too much alarmed to be capable of enjoying even the very smallest show of civility; and when she retired with a curtsy, I retired to rest, wearied by my day's exploits, and preeminently satisfied with my treatment at the Crown.

In the morning, breakfast much of the same school with the dinner, was served; and at eleven I desired the waiter to order me a chaise to Chichester. He went, but in a few mo-

ments the indefatigable landlord himself arrived to say that the horses would be out directly, but that he had directed that they should be put to a chariot belonging to a gentleman in the Isle of Wight, who had left the carriage there, and who he was perfectly confident would be too happy that I should do him the honour of using it.

When the current is setting smoothly along, in the very direction we wish, it always appears to me to be excessively absurd to throw pebbles into it to ruffle its surface, and perhaps divert it from its course. I therefore, after the manner I had adopted during the preceding evening, merely bowed assent, and naturally preferring a well-stuffed carriage to a hard and rattling "yellow," permitted my kind landlord to go his own way to work.

Then came the alloy—the bill—which I admit *did* appear to me to be of a considerable amount;—but to be sure, the accommodations were excellent—the wine so good—the *cuisine* perfect, always excepting and never

forgetting the stadtholder's soup. One charge, however, puzzled me—it was before Daly had enlightened me as to the customs of Wales—besides I was not in Wales—and that charge was, one pound one shilling for “ringers.” I was struck by this, and ventured to inquire what it meant. I was informed that the bells of the parish church had been rung in honour of my arrival and residence within its precincts—luckily for my comfort, before I was awake. I thought it odd, and foolish; but nevertheless, the thing was done, and the bells could not be unring; so I paid the bill as it was presented to me, to the no small deterioration of my property, and stepped into the comfortable carriage of the unconscious gentleman in the Isle of Wight, amidst a profusion of bows and curtsies, my landlord standing at the door uncovered, the powder from his head blowing up High Street like snow drifting before the wind.

At Chichester I stopped to pay a visit—the link between me and Portsmouth was broken;

and I amused myself by reciting to my friends the particulars of my adventure at the Crown—the moral of my tale being the exhibition of the difference of accommodation which exists in every inn, regulated according to the whim of the master, or the circumstances of the guest—and there the matter ended.

The next day I went on to Brighton, where my servant had previously arrived, and took up my residence in Dorset Gardens—a place then the more esteemed by me, for reasons which I need not now record; and felt, I can scarcely describe how, because I perceived in the Brightonians none of the devoted civility, or servility, perhaps, which had so distinctly distinguished the people of Portsmouth.

But time unravels most things—Junius will be discovered at last. The very next morning a friend did me the kindness to breakfast with me; and, having concluded the meal, proposed a walk until luncheon. I, too lazy to go upstairs to my dressing-room, ordered my servant to bring me my boots; he did so—but he brough

not those which I intended to wear. See upon what trifles great events sometimes turn—he went for another pair, leaving those which he had previously brought.

“Those are good-looking boots,” said my friend the Colonel—“Hoby’s?”

“No,” said I—“they were made by a man of the name of O’Shaughnessy—Paget Daly O’Shaughnessy, in St. James’s Street.”

“Very nice boots indeed,” said the Colonel.

“Yes,” said I; “and what is best of all, fit me remarkably well, although not made for me; he had faithfully promised me a pair of boots for the day I left Town; but, as usual, failed me; and when my man went for them they were yet unmade. However, he sent me these, made expressly for the Prince of Orange; and, odd enough to say, they fit me better than any he ever made for me purposely.”

“That’s curious enough,” said the Colonel; “but if I had been you, I should have made my servant scratch out the Prince’s name, which is written on the inside of them, else it

might appear that you had appropriated His Highness's property to your own use."

"What!" said I "is the Prince's name *there*?"

"Here," said the Colonel, "read." And so I did; and sure enough there were the words "H. S. H. The Prince of Orange, 789,465;" the figures meaning to imply that Mr. Paget Daly O'Shaugnessy had himself made seven hundred and eighty-nine thousand, four hundred and sixty-five pairs of boots, as watchmakers put an infinity of figures upon their watches, beginning, as I believe, at twenty or thirty thousand. I was prodigiously startled at this discovery, and I must admit somewhat mortified.

"Now," said I, "I see it all—now can I account for my retrograde promotion from the conservatory; from the skylight to the drawing-room at the Crown. Now do I know why I was looked at with respect and veneration. Now do I comprehend why those pretty girls wore orange handkerchiefs, and the fairest of chambermaids trembled. Now do I under-

stand why I was blessed by old ladies, and lighted to the play with lanthorns; why the bells were rung in mine honour, and why I was drenched with Stadtholder's soup. These, my dear Colonel, are the boots I wore at Portsmouth; then saturated, since dried; from these very boots did the people there derive their notions of my character and consequence, and to these boots am I indebted for paying the landlord of that excellent inn at least four pounds more than I should have paid, if I had worn anonymous leggings!"

"Ah," said the Colonel, "as Titus Andronicus says—

"If you had gone all *bootless* to them,
They would not have heeded you."

"I confess," replied I, "my vanity is a little wounded. *N'importe*—I was well lodged, and the landlord well paid—if he is content, so am I; and I never will use the word *BOOTS* reproachfully again as long as I live."

Strange as this adventure may appear, it

must be quite clear, that a visit to the Crown upon the present occasion, was by no means desirable, because I should have destroyed a beautiful vision which the family had conjured up, and been myself degraded into a private gentleman, travelling with a gig and a couple of horses—sad falling off from royalty. This it was that induced me to take to the Dolphins at Southampton; whence, after the arrival of my man, I proceeded in the packet, which sailed in the afternoon, to Cowes, there being no other mode of proceeding; and the wind dying away, we were fortunate, as we imagined, in landing at the Vine Inn in about six hours after our departure from the main land.

To me a little delay and a little *détour* were matters rather of satisfaction than complaint. I became more at my ease every hour that increased the distance between me and the captivating woman whose independence of manner and frankness of character had been then, as I fancied it, my ruin; and it was not until I

got to the back of the island, that I felt as if I had secured myself against the self-reproaches with which my exhibition at her house had loaded me.

In that sweet island did I remain for three whole months, in a state of mind scarcely describable. Deceived and defeated by Daly—thrown over by Mrs. Green—and full of anxiety to hear from my brother Cuthbert, to whom I began to think I should most certainly go—I was more like a madman than anything else, and so indeed I think I was considered. However, time and patience, my old remedies, stood me in good stead upon that, as they have upon more recent occasions; and having worn out—which is the only word I can find for it—a period which I fancied sufficient to deaden the feelings of regret by which I had been so severely assailed, I resolved upon once more visiting London, in order to consult the only real friend I had as to the expediency of my oriental voyage.

CHAPTER VI.

IN order to carry my prudential scheme into execution, I despatched my servant with the horses, by the “ferry of the four feet” to Portsmouth; and, directing him to secure me an inside place for the following Tuesday, in any coach which went from any other inn than the Crown, and to send me back word what the name of the conveyance was for which I was booked, I proceeded “according to advice” upon that morning by Beazley’s packet, almost before it was light, and reached the motley town in which I had once unconsciously shone in a very different character; where having landed close by the baths, I smuggled myself into the stage, most desirous of escaping the recognition of

any of the self-made dupes of my imaginary rank.

As soon as I got into the coach, I found myself in company with a middle-aged gentleman, whom I then thought old, but in whose countenance I saw some favourable indications “of a mind within;” and although, at that period, people of sense had not *be-deville-d* themselves with the solemn absurdities of phrenology, I fancied that, without being either as civil as Spurzheim, or as bitter as Gall, I might calculate upon enjoying what, at that period of my life, I was not averse from (in hopes of picking up information and knowledge),—some rational and agreeable conversation with my companion during our journey to London.

The ice of English formality was upon this occasion, as usual, broken by the English absurdity of a trite remark upon the weather. “It is very wet to-day,” said by one man to another, while the rain is pattering down upon

the roof of the carriage which contains them, and the bubbles in the puddles are hopping up like so many fairy water-sprites, is, as everybody acknowledges, both superfluous and ridiculous; but it leads to other things, and the assenting "very" to the obvious remark, sows the seed of future conversation. So it happened then, and in less than half the distance to Horndean, I had received from my companion, the information that he was an army surgeon, who had come home on leave of absence from Jamaica, on account of ill health; but that, although he had been sufficiently unwell to justify the permission he had obtained, his main object in coming to England was to make arrangements for carrying out his wife upon his return to the West Indies: she having written out to him to represent her situation in this country, alone, and, as it were, widowed, beyond measure irksome and distressing to her feelings.

He accounted to me for not having taken

her with him in the first instance—for he spoke of her in terms of such devotion and affection, that I could not help asking him why she had not been the companion of his first voyage—by describing her health to have been extremely delicate, and by the fact that he had exchanged from the regiment to which he then belonged, and which had returned home before the period at which we were speaking; so that by the exchange—which was a favourable one to him, financially and professionally—his plans had been considerably altered, and his probable residence in the colonies very much protracted.

I liked him extremely, and was almost vexed when, at Liphook, a rather pertish, forward-looking young man—about my own age at that time—stepped into the coach, and disturbed our *tête-à-tête*. Upon the accession of our third member, we relapsed into silence; and, except upon the occasion of seeing a man thrown from his horse between Milford and Godalming, little occurred worthy of notice,

till we reached the Crown at Guildford, where we found the cold round of beef, the hot leg of mutton, and the pickles and potatoes, ready for consumption ; the work of devastation having been, previous to our entrance, commenced by a gentleman, who soon informed us that we were to have the pleasure of his company to complete the *parti carré* in our conveyance.

There is something extremely socializing in the community of interests of a small party on a cold day round a good fire, at a luncheon. We drank ale, and port wine, and hot brandy and water—offered each other snuff—cracked jokes, and began, as the warmth of the room thawed us, to feel ourselves sufficiently at home and comfortable, to regret the call of the “Faulkner” of his day, couched in the emphatic words, “*Now, gentlemen, if you please,*” which was to remove us from the magic semi-circle formed round the hearth of mine host of the Crown.

We entered the coach, evidently pleased with each other, and in as different a humour

from that in which we were when three of us got out of it, as can well be conceived. I felt quite at my ease, and had no scruple in relating my adventure detailed in the preceding chapter, which appeared to my companions, when they had heard my narrative, nearly as inexplicable as it had been to myself, until I reached the *dénouement* at Brighton.

“ I,” said Mr. Dillington—so was our last acquaintance named—“ *I* have recently been engaged in an adventure; but mine is a more straight-forward, matter of fact affair—to me of the most agreeable nature, I admit. I came into this neighbourhood only the day before yesterday, meaning to remain here some time, but the magical influence of a pair of the brightest eyes I ever beheld, has upset all my projects, and carries me to London, in spite of all the pressing entreaties of my hospitable friends in Surrey.”

“ Yes,” said I, “ such things are irresistible. I conclude, by your outline, that yours is a love-at-first-sight case ? ”

“I flatter myself,” said Dillington, who was extremely well qualified for a lady-killer, “I flatter myself that it is so, on both sides. All I know is, that I am speeding my way to town, to meet my adorable Dulcinea at the Piazza door of Covent Garden play-house, where I am to have the happiness—at her own suggestion—of accompanying her to witness the performance of the play, ‘blest as the immortal gods,’ fondly sitting by her side, to

‘Hear and see her all the while
Softly speak, and gently smile.’ ”

“Rather an easy conquest,” said the army surgeon; “is it to be a *tête-à-tête*?”

“I rather suspect not,” said Dillington; “I think she talked of some elderly body, in the shape of an aunt, who was to accompany her, and play Propriety; however I fancied that, by way of a *premier pas*, I had succeeded capitally. She positively refused to tell me where she lived, and, I think, has made the

assignation in order to try the extent of my earnestness and anxiety about her, before she reposes a more extensive confidence in me."

"May I ask," said I, "is she maid, wife, or widow?"

"I did not trouble her with any questions on that point," said Dillington; "she wore a wedding-ring, which she flourished in my face two or three times during our journey together, while drawing the whitest of hands over the brightest of eyes. I had not more than an hour and three-quarters to make my play; I got into the coach this side Petersfield, and was forced *malgré moi*, to stop at Godalming to fulfil the engagement, which was to have lasted ten days; but which, although I lost her at the moment, has been curtailed of its fair proportions in order to regain my adorable *incognita*; and, to tell truth, I think I lost little by that, for a robust, healthy-looking female, 'a nursing mother,' with a baby and a boy of eight or nine years' old, were crammed into the coach at Milford, booked all the way to London, so

that all confidential conversation in the way of business must of course have ceased at that point. This evening I shall see her again, and all will be well."

" Oh !" sighed my opposite neighbour, a plain pale man, with white whiskers and a short nose ; " if you could but guess the pain, Sir, that your success gives me, you would not speak so thoughtlessly of your happiness. I, too, am in pursuit of a lady—one to whom I am heart and soul devoted—who has treated me hardly and harshly—I never fancied I could be so weak and silly ; but, as you say, man is not master of himself, and

‘ When a lady’s in the case,
All other things of course give place.’ ”

" Then, Sir," said I, " I presume you are actually on your road to the Barley Mow ?"

" Barley Mow !" said Mr. Lackington ; " no, Sir ; I am on my way to a village near town, in which my charming, capricious devil of a widow lives ; but whether she will be in a sunshiny

humour or a cloudy one when I arrive there, is to *me* a matter of great uncertainty."

"But I conclude," said Dillington, "you don't allow yourself to weep and wail without some consolation?"

"No," said Lackington, "I had the pleasure of her exclusive society at Eastbourn for a fortnight last autumn, where we were as happy as two turtle-doves, until something crossed her mind—or perhaps, I *may* say, her temper—and she started off for London, leaving a short note behind her, telling me my following her would be perfectly useless, since she had resolved utterly to cut my acquaintance for the future."

"The unkindest cut of all," said I. "And yet your lingering, longing love remains, and you are determined to try your fortune at a reconciliation."

"Even so, Sir," said Lackington, heaving a deep-drawn sigh, which seemed to come from the very bottom of his heart.

"Upon my word, gentlemen," said the army surgeon, "I have been listening to your con-

versation, and I *must* say that the morals of my countrymen and countrywomen do not appear to have improved during my absence from England ; assure yourselves that the pursuits in which you seem both to be engaged, however exciting at the moment, bring with them anything but solid gratification—independently of their actual impropriety, they generally produce causes for repentance and sorrow. If a man fail in the object of his heart, he becomes miserable himself—if he succeed, the chances are he makes another more miserable still ; rely upon it, that wrong never comes right, and that no man is truly respectable until he marries, and devotes his cares, his anxiety, and his attentions to a gentle and confiding partner, whose virtues and merits soothe him in adversity, and give new brightness to prosperity.”

“ I presume, Sir,” said Dillington, “ you are yourself a Benedick.”

“ Thank my lucky stars I am,” said the surgeon ; “ and am returning to a happy, humble home, to carry with me to the sphere of

my duty as amiable a being as ever drew the breath of life."

"Perhaps," said Dillington, "your absence has given a new zest to your feelings, and if you had not been separated from the lady, the sameness——"

"Oh no," interrupted the surgeon; "rely upon it, habitual attachments are always the strongest and most permanent :

' True affection lasts the longer
When its brightest hours are o'er ;
Parting sorrows bind it stronger,
Mem'ry but endears it more.'

I have been wretched during the year and a half I have been absent, and have now, as I was telling this gentleman before you joined us,"—pointing at the same time to *me*,—"made my health a plea for getting leave of absence to surprise *her* with my arrival, and my resolution of taking her abroad with me ; unless I should eventually be able to exchange again into some other regiment."

"I can easily conceive the delight of such a

meeting," said I. "In every man's life there are a few moments of unqualified happiness—you, I suspect, are destined to enjoy such to-day."

"Not to-day," said the surgeon, "for I have to pass through town to my cottage, and must report myself at the Horse Guards before I start; but to-morrow by this time I shall again be at home—and what a word is home!"

Dillington seemed much struck by the earnestness, almost amounting to enthusiasm, with which our medical friend eulogized the "blissful state," and I began to think he would give up the pursuit in which he was engaged, in deference to the opinions and principles of the surgeon. Lackington gazed with admiration on the picture our friend painted of connubial comfort and domestic happiness, and every now and then I am sure his thoughts reverted to his capricious widow, and that even *he* was beginning to think he might as well rivet her heart, by making her his wife, provided always, of course, that she would accept his offer.

The conversation which had taken place had produced an increase of confidence amongst us, and, voting ourselves a very pleasant party, we agreed, after we had passed Kingston, to dine together at some coffee-house in London—a proposition to which Dillington most willingly acceded, provided we dined early and near the theatre. By this condition I ascertained that his intentions as to the fair lady with the bright eyes remained unaltered; and as I had no responsible authority over his morality, I suggested the Piazza Coffee-house as the most suitable and convenient scene of action. Nothing could be better for all parties; for the surgeon was to sleep at the Hummums, and Mr. Lackington at the Tavistock (corrupted by the market-people into Cabbage-stalk) hotel; and Dillington, who was to be set down at the corner of Berkeley-street, would, after dressing at his lodgings in Mount Street, proceed to the coffee-house, the door of which adjoined the door of the theatre, at which, precisely at seven o'clock, in a hackney-coach,

the lady, or ladies, as the case might be, would arrive in fulfilment of their appointment.

I undertook to order dinner and secure a table—a proceeding which, in those times of taverns and theatricals, was absolutely necessary; and having done both in the most judicious manner, I awaited the arrival of my new acquaintance, who had agreed upon six punctually—Dillington, of course, not caring for the shortness of the time allowed him to drink to his fair one's health, nor hesitating a moment between the allurements of Venus and the attractions of Bacchus.

I thought while I was waiting for my company that I had been somewhat precipitate and incautious in selecting so popular and populous a place as the Piazza for the exhibition of myself in company with three persons of whom, in fact, I knew nothing—of whom two, by their own confessions, were professed libertines, and the third of whom might not be what he professed himself: however, in those days, I generally acted upon the impulse of the moment,

and sought amusement without very particularly investigating the source whence it was derivable. Nevertheless, upon this particular day, I became, I scarcely know why, more scrupulous than usual. I saw the coffee-room filling with persons of consequence and character, who, in those days, went to see plays and dine early in the neighbourhood of the playhouses; and feeling that it might be disadvantageous, at my time of life, to incur the responsibility of the manners, conduct, and conversation of my new friends, I called a waiter, and inquired if we could have a private room to dine in, to which he gave a most civil affirmative, and in less than ten minutes I found myself snugly established in the small dining-parlour which opens, or then opened on the right hand of the door into the hall.

Scarcely had the clock struck six when the trio appeared nearly together — Dillington, dressed evidently to the best advantage, and displaying unequivocal confidence in the tie of his neckcloth and the curl of his whiskers; Lackington in the deshabelle of desponding

affection ; and the surgeon, who was married and settled, and whose heart-catching days were over, in his morning costume, having only refreshed himself at his hotel.

The luncheon at Guildford had considerably damped our anxiety for dinner, which, however, was put down and eaten, the wine passing somewhat rapidly, in compliment to the expectant lover, who kept his eyes attentively on the dial of the clock, in order that he might be punctual to the moment ; and Lackington exhibiting a good deal of feverish anxiety to tell us something, which modesty, or delicacy, or some doubt as to the prudence or propriety of making further confidence with strangers, appeared to hinder him from imparting. At last, however, after a few glasses of sherry, which Dillington denounced for its resemblance to lamp oil, and one or two of champagne, which the same unquestionable authority proclaimed to be indubitable gooseberry, he resolved upon communicativeness.

As far as the affected airs of Dillington about

the wine and the cookery went, I cannot help saying (*par parenthèse*) that they gave me no very favourable opinion of either his taste or character. The swaggerer is invariably an impostor—the man who calls loudest for the waiter, who treats him worst, and who finds more fault than anybody else in the room, where the company is mixed, will always turn out to be the man of all others the least entitled, either by rank or intelligence, to give himself airs. People who are conscious of what is due to themselves, never display irritability or impetuosity; their manners ensure civility,—their own civility secures respect; but the blockhead or the coxcomb, fully aware that something more than ordinary is necessary to produce an effect, is sure, whether in clubs or coffee-rooms, to be the most fastidious and captious of the community, the most overbearing in his manners towards his inferiors—the most restless and irritable among his equals—the most cringing and subservient before his superiors.

Poor Mr. Lackington had not an atom of swagger in his composition; he therefore drank his sherry and champagne, and as his heart warmed, his lips opened.

“I am sure,” said he, “it must seem very strange in *me* to fancy that my affairs can interest three gentlemen whom I never saw till to-day; but as we have acted hitherto upon the give and take principle of community in our prospects and pursuits, I think I ought to tell you, as a sequel to what I said on the journey, that I have received a letter from my Fanny——”

“What!” said I, “your bewitching and bewitched widow?”

“Exactly so,” said Lackington; “and if you really *do* care about the *dénouement*, you will be glad to hear that she is to be in town the day after to-morrow, and expresses a wish to see me, to be reconciled, and to cast into oblivion all that has passed between us of a disagreeable character.”

“I rejoice,” said I.

"I echo your congratulation," said Dillington.

"And so do I," said the surgeon, "with this proviso—that you marry her. Recollect my advice in the earlier part of the day—the fact that she desires a reconciliation, is a proof that she is really attached to you. Put an end to all these ungentle and unnecessary agitations of temper and feeling—make her your wife."

"I would—indeed I would," said Lackington, with something like tears in his eyes—"but I cannot."

"What is the nature of the impediment?" said the surgeon.

"That," said Lackington, "which you so earnestly recommend—matrimony!"

"As how?" asked I.

"I am married already," said Lackington.

"Married, Sir!" said the surgeon; "married!—and yet—why, this is worse and worse. *That* gentleman's libertinism"—pointing to Dillington—"shocked me, but he is a single man, and——"

“I wish with all my heart, Sir, I had his excuse,” said Lackington; “but I *have* one for what may seem gross impropriety and immorality. I will explain—my story is short but really affecting.”

Saying which, he “called up a look” which he meant to be pathetic, but which, owing to the peculiar formation of his features, and the particular cast of his countenance, exceeded in comicality anything I had ever seen, except Liston when melancholic.

“It must be short,” said the triumphant Dillington, “if *I* am to hear it; I have but twenty-two minutes and three seconds left.”

“It will not occupy half that time,” said Lackington; “and I should like to justify myself in Dr. Martingale’s eyes for what must appear extremely heartless conduct in roaming and roving, having a wife of my own.”

“I shall indeed be glad to listen,” said Dr. Martingale, such was our surgeon’s name; “for I have very decided opinions upon the particular point of matrimonial obligations.”

“Well, then,” said Lackington, “I will be as brief as possible, and you shall know all. When I was nineteen years old, which is now ten years since, I did what a great many—indeed I may say most young men do at that age—I fell in love, and with such a girl as nobody ever saw: her eyes——”

“Never mind her eyes,” said Dillington, “don’t stop to particularize her points. I have but nineteen minutes and a half, and if you go into details I must run away.”

“Well,” said Lackington, “she was everything a man could desire in a wife; and, above all, she was kind to me, reciprocated my feelings, and, after some few weeks of feverish anxiety, I proposed, was accepted, but referred to her father, who, without hearing me out, ordered me out, and declared that his intentions for his daughter were of a character wholly incompatible with *my* means and situation, and desired that I never would mention the subject to her or himself again, and never make my appearance at his house any more.

“The consequence of this rebuff was,” continued Lackington, “as you may suppose,—an increased affection on our parts, and a determination, *coûte qui coûte*, to elope. A scheme was planned, which would have been most effectually carried into execution, if I had not, by some misfortune or other, pounced into the old General’s room by mistake for his daughter’s, who was waiting, bundle in hand, with her mind made up, and her maid beside her, all on tiptoe, ready to bound down stairs to my post-chaise, which was in waiting. The consequence was, a discovery of the plot; a severe remonstrance to my father from the General; and close confinement for six months to my gentle Adelgi-tha.”

“Pass the wine,” said Dillington. “A thousand pardons. Let us call the waiter and get the bill. Pray go on.”

“My father,” said Lackington, “entering strongly into the General’s feelings, sent me abroad, where I remained, pursuing my studies,

for three years, which I admit I felt to be a terrible waste of time."

Herein I tacitly agreed.

"At last," continued the unfortunate gentleman, "I returned home; and the first act of my life was to discover whether my Adelgitha was unmarried. I succeeded in ascertaining that she was still Miss Rowbottom. I felt secure of success, now that, I thought, all suspicion of my intentions must be lulled, and convinced, by her remaining single, that I was still dear to her. Of course, my inquiries about her were made with great caution and circumspection. I had learned enough—I sought no more; but, proceeding to the neighbourhood of her father's house, soon contrived to convey a note to her, couched it terms of unmitigated affection, and conjuring her to let me know the state of her sentiments as regarded me. I received her answer: her feelings towards me were the same as they had been three years before, so were her cruel father's. 'Circumstances which had occurred,'

she told me, ‘as I must naturally suppose, had rendered her life more unhappy, and her confinement more rigid ; still, if I held in the mind to rescue her from thralldom, she was prepared to renew our plan, now of three years’ standing.’ Her note ended by conjuring me to weigh well what I was undertaking, as a diminution of my affection would break her heart.

“ Everything was arranged : two notes more settled the business ; and on the third night after my arrival in the neighbourhood, I lifted my gentle Adelgitha from the library window of her father’s house into my carriage. She was so agitated at our meeting, and at the excitement of the whole affair, that she could not stand, and I deposited her myself in the vehicle which was to convey us to happiness *viâ* Dover, whence we were to proceed to Boulogne to be married—a scheme proposed by me to obviate the necessary delay for residence, in order to obtain a license ; and as Adelgitha was out of her nonage, I thought Gretna would be carrying the joke a little too far.”

“Despatch,” said Dillington, whose eye was as attentive to the dial as his ear to the dialogue.

“I will,” said Lackington; “but I know you’ll laugh at me, although it is, indeed, no laughing matter. As we proceeded on our rapid journey towards the coast, I made ten thousand inquiries as to the sufferings my dear girl had undergone since my departure, and received every assurance of affection and kindness from the dear object of my heart; but in the midst of my anxieties and endearments, I every now and then heard a knocking against the bottom of the carriage, which, to a nervous man, sounded very like a growing failure in the axle-tree; but whenever I attempted to listen, my dear Adelgitha diverted my attention from the sound, by fresh professions of affection and esteem.

“‘I scarcely expected, dear Frederick,’ said she, ‘that you would have remained constant: I thought perhaps the news of the dreadful occurrence might have induced you to retract;

and that you might have considered it a perfect justification of your withdrawal.'

" 'What accident?' said I. 'Tell me, my beloved.'

" 'Don't you know, Frederick?' said my affectionate companion.

" 'Indeed I do not,' said I; and at that moment I heard the same noise which had so frequently attracted my attention, and interrupted her for a moment by asking her if she did not hear the thumping, as I thought, of the chariot on the perch.

" 'Oh, Frederick!' sobbed the agitated girl, 'that's *it*.'

" 'It!' said I; 'what, my angel? Do you really know what it is?'

" 'Don't be alarmed, Frederick,' said Adelgitha. 'I wish you had known it before.'

" 'Known what?' exclaimed I.

" 'Known *it*, dearest,' said she, crying afresh.

" 'What is the noise?' said I, 'and what has it to do with our destinies?'

“ ‘I feared it would have a serious effect upon you,’ replied Miss Rowbottom; ‘but no! your mind and feelings soar above it.’

“ ‘It!’ cried I, impatiently; ‘but what is it?—what does it mean?—what is the noise?’

“ ‘*My* leg, Frederick,’ said Adelgitha, dropping her lovely face upon my shoulder, which I declare, upon my word, gentlemen, was as wet through with her tears as if I had been caught in a shower of rain.”

“ ‘*Your* leg, dearest!’ said I.

“ ‘Yes; the result of that dreadful fall from my horse, of which you were, of course, aware,’ said Adelgitha. ‘The torture of amputation was nothing, to the dread I felt lest it should alter your affection for me; but I thought I knew you better.’

“ ‘I thought, gentlemen,’ said Lackington, ‘I should have died. I fancied perhaps she was joking, or trying the strength of my affection; for I know what women will do in that way sometimes. However, as it was quite dark, and we were peculiarly situated, I ventured,

with the greatest delicacy and decorum imaginable, to ascertain the fact forthwith; and there, sure enough, my hand lighted upon a stumpy stick, of the Greenwich Hospital regulation cut, and which, whenever my bride elect had become at all animated or energetic, had been bumping and knocking itself about against the bottom of the chaise.

“ I would have given the world to have known of the accident, to which, up to that moment, I was a perfect stranger. I should I dare say, have, loved her the more for her misfortunes; the loss of a limb in a man is nothing; on the contrary, it constantly brings to our hearts and minds the gratitude we owe to those who fight our battles by sea and land; and even though Miss Rowbottom might not have claimed my sympathy upon that score, I felt quite sure I should have overcome all the foolish prejudices which a man has about the symmetry of a sylph of seventeen, (which she was when I last quitted her,) in gratitude for her attachment to me. But the surprise, the

suddenness of the thing, gentlemen, to find, instead of the beautiful tapering ancle and miniature foot I had left, no foot, no ancle, no nothing, but a small black balustrade—I *do* declare I was completely taken aback.”

We could scarcely restrain our laughter at this recital, which was delivered by our white-faced friend in the most plaintive tone of voice, and in the most melancholy manner. Dillington himself had not looked at the clock for three minutes, and the hand was on the quarter; but the tale was “wondrous moving.”

“Well,” said I, “how did you proceed?”

“Why, Sir,” said Lackington, “I withdrew my hand, of whose presence the leg I had indeed touched had not been conscious, and turned to my weeping companion for some explanation of the cause of this unfortunate substitution, to which I was yet a stranger. Adelgitha gave a long description of the terrible accident which had produced the calamity with which I had just been made acquainted, and I felt deeply affected by the recital. However, gentlemen,

you will perhaps imagine my sensations, when she wound up the history by telling me that what I had now discovered was a trifle to what I should see in the morning.

“ What she meant, I could not, for the life of me, comprehend; and I waited for daylight with all the anxiety of a shipwrecked mariner, but without any of his hopes.

“ The excess of Adelgitha’s agitation had worn her out; and, some time after the conclusion of her narrative, she fell asleep, with her head upon my shoulder, with her hand clasped in mine. *I* could not sleep: I sat and watched the coming dawn; till, at length, the first ray of morning beamed through the glasses of the carriage. I won’t attempt, gentlemen, to describe the dreadful effects which the accident had actually produced upon her once beautiful countenance, nor the effects those effects produced upon *me*: nor will I endeavour to disguise or describe my horror at the discovery. Here was the daylight come; and I should have to hand her out of the chariot, and into the packet;

and I should have to attend to her, and talk to her, and at last to marry her, and to be her constant companion for life. I could not refuse—I could not hurt her feelings, or practically acknowledge the revulsion produced in my own by any exhibition of disinclination to fulfil my promise and redeem my pledge.

“The sun was quite up when she woke; and opening—would I could say her eyes!—for when one beamed upon me, I found the other was gone. It looked at me as much as to say, ‘Well, what do you think of *this*?’—it did, upon my word, gentlemen; and I am afraid I could not conceal my agony of mind from Adelgitha herself. She, however appeared—as all women do—to bear the evil with resignation and goodhumour, seemingly careless as to the effects it had produced upon herself, and only valuing it with reference to that which it might be supposed to have upon *me*. I could not speak. What could I say? Could I tell her that she looked as well with one eye as she had done with two; or that a nose broken across

the bridge was more lovely than a delicate aquiline? I could not say *that*; so I had recourse to the silent eloquence which is all-powerful in love, and caught her to my heart with a sensation of affection and compassion. The moment I did so, I heard the infernal bumping at the bottom of the chaise again; it destroyed all my sentimentality in a moment."

"Push on," said Dillington; "I have but five minutes, and we have to pay the bill. Well, tell us, what did you do?"

"Persuaded her," said Lackington, "to alight at the next stage, and get some coffee, and take half an hour's rest—a proposition to which she readily acceded; and we were ushered into a very comfortable room on the ground floor, selected by the considerate waiter no doubt on account of its more convenient position to a lady under Adelgitha's particular circumstances.

"When she had retired with her maid, and I was left alone, I began to consider what was best to be done. I knew enough of the generosity and disinterestedness of female hearts to

believe that she would not think of holding me to my bargain, if I candidly confessed how deeply I felt the alteration which had taken place; but how could I explain the sensations which occupied me, without wounding her almost to the death? for what appeared very singular to me, and which I believe is not singular at all, was, that from habit, (the accident had happened two years before,) and that happy reconciliation of our minds to what must be, and *is*; she appeared to me, in spite of her lamentations, practically to consider herself very much the same as she was before the event happened; for when she entered the room into which we were first shown at the inn, she stumped up to the looking-glass, and setting her curls in order, exclaimed, ‘How hideous this night travelling makes one look!’

“I stared,” continued Lackington, “but said nothing; and when she returned from her half-hour’s rest, I thought she fancied all my surprise was over, and that I saw her now just as she was when we parted. This mortified me: she

seemed to allow me no credit for my efforts to be amiable and honourable; and I gave orders for 'horses on,' resolved to impress upon her mind during the next ten miles, in as delicate a manner as possible, the real state of my heart.

"While we were waiting for the coming steeds, a travelling carriage and four drove up to the inn gate at a slapping pace. The noise of the opening door and falling steps attracted my eye, when, in an instant, who should appear before us but General Rowbottom, and the Major, his son—the father and brother of Mrs. Lackington elect.

"'So, Adelgitha,' said the General, bursting into the room, 'we have caught you.'

"Adelgitha made no reply; her surviving eye filled with tears, and she sank into her brother's arms. As for myself, I felt I can scarcely tell how. I am afraid I rather rejoiced than not, that we were overtaken.

"'Mr. Lackington,' said the General, turning to me, 'what is the meaning of this rash and foolish step? Three years ago I forbade you

my house. I believed your attachment to my daughter was a pretence to possess yourself of the fortune she then expected from her aunt, Lady Swivelscombe, and I shut my door upon you. You return three years afterwards, and precipitately and unadvisedly enter into a clandestine correspondence with my child, and eventually carry her off, in a state of health, and under circumstances, which require the greatest care and attention.'

" 'General,' said I, 'I admit the fact; but allow me to be heard in my vindication.'

" 'Certainly, Sir,' said the General, calmly and temperately.

" 'I admit the constancy, and sincerity, and disinterestedness of my attachment to Miss Rowbottom,' said I; 'I disclaim all care about her fortune—I acted upon the impulse of a long cherished feeling; but,' added I, with a degree of diplomatic dexterity for which, perhaps, gentlemen, you may not give me credit, 'sooner than cause her a moment's unhappiness, or the entailment of a parent's displeasure, I

am prepared this instant to give her up. Yes, Sir,' said I, in what I considered a magnanimous tone of voice, '*I can make sacrifices as well as others.*'

" 'Give her up!' said the General; 'by Jove, Sir, you shall do no such thing. I and Charles have followed you on your route in order to stop your needless career. If you had written to me—if Adelgitha had spoken one word to me—now that you have proved yourself worthy of her, I should not have hesitated for a moment to receive you into my house, and welcome you as my son-in-law.'

" 'Sir,' said I, amazed more I believe than delighted, 'this is very strange!—this total alteration of your sentiments towards me I could not have been prepared for—I am but what I was—I am as unworthy as ever.'

" 'Excuse me, my dear Lackington,' said the General, 'your affection has been tested not only by time, but by circumstances; you proffered your suit when Adelgitha was lovely, and you, I thought, were captivated by

her person, rather than her mind and qualities—you made your offer when she was the expectant heiress to a fortune of eighty thousand pounds from Lady Swivelscombe—an accident has marred her beauty yet you still pursue her—Lady Swivelscombe's second marriage has deprived her of the fortune she expected, and yet you bind yourself to her for ever. What can a father desire more of a son-in-law than such convincing proofs of honour and affection? Give me your hand, Lackington, and assure yourself that you need go no farther on your flying tour to matrimony; my house and my heart alike are open to you both.'

"This was a finisher," said Lackington.

"You married her?" asked Dillington.

"I did," replied the other, "and——"

"Stay," cried Dillington, interrupting him; "the clock is striking seven—I cannot stop to hear the rest—my sweet Maria is doubtless at the door—let the waiter know what my share of the bill is, and I will call and settle it, for I have not a moment to lose. If my fair incognita

prove faithless, I shall be back in five minutes—if not, I trust we shall soon meet again.”

Saying which, the impatient lover, having shaken hands with us all, flew from our presence to keep his engagement, leaving the doctor and myself to hear the termination of Lackington’s lament.

“Conclude, conclude,” said Martingale; “you married her, Sir; that is the point at which to *me* the interest begins, for it is thence I endeavour to trace the value of my principles and opinions regarding matrimony.”

“I did, Sir,” said Lackington; “but in the course of the negociation (for our correspondence assumed that character), my father and my friends so earnestly dissuaded me from fulfilling an engagement into which I had been what they called forced, that I believe I must admit that I leant a little to *their* way of thinking, and exhibited some symptoms of a desire to withdraw. I found it, however, impossible; both the General and the Major had made up their minds to

the match, and I should have been tried by military law if I had declined—and so—we were united.”

“And what,” said I, “marred your domestic happiness? I admit that the damages which your lady had received might detract from her personal attractions, but her mind ——”

“Aye, Sir,” sighed Lackington, “that’s *it*, as Mrs. L. said of her leg. While she was beautiful, I never thought of her mind—while she was beautiful, she never showed her temper—and moreover, the fact that she was aware that I would not have married her if I could possibly have avoided it, set her so entirely against me, that for two years she led me such a life as compelled me, at the beginning of the third, to seek a separation; but that—and I have stated all the circumstances to show the fact—that does not, as you know, enable me to marry where I could really and fondly love.”

“Have you any family, Sir?” said the doctor, evidently collecting materials for some new eulogy on the married state.

“ No, Sir,” said Lackington, in a most lugubrious tone, “ I have no progeny.”

“ I think,” said Dr. Martingale, drawing himself up into an imposing attitude, “ you have made out a case—the circumstances are peculiar—very peculiar indeed—and yet I also think if you were to make up your mind to it, all might yet be well ; the former exacerbation of the lady’s feelings might be soothed and softened by renewed attentions and a fresh show of kindness. There is, Mr. Lackington,” continued the doctor, “ and I never can repeat it too often, a sweet community of interests—a binding reciprocity of feeling—a mutual confidence—existing in the married state which no other can afford. I will instance myself and Mrs. Martingale —”

How much farther the Doctor might have proceeded in his eulogistic harangue upon matrimony and Mrs. Martingale, I cannot pretend to say, for just at that moment a considerable scuffling was heard in the hall, and in an instant the door of our room was hastily

opened by Dillington, who appeared before us in a state of the highest excitement.

“ Doctor, doctor,” said he, addressing himself to Martingale, “ your professional assistance is wanted—an accident has occurred—the lady I have spoken of, in stepping down the infernal iron ladder of a hackney-coach, has sprained her ankle, and is suffering so much pain as to have fainted.”

“ Bring her in, bring her in,” said the doctor, rising from his seat.

“ Poor thing !” said Lackington ; “ pray attend to it—think what may be the consequence—that’s it.”

Accordingly we rose, and forthwith a delicate young creature, in a half-fainting state, was brought into the room, and by us, laid on the tavern-regulation horse-hair sofa, which stood opposite the fire-place. A thick veil covered her face, but her figure was symmetrical.

“ You had better leave the room,” said the doctor to us in an under tone ; “ she must lose blood.”

“Not without one peep at her face,” whispered I, as Dillington was entering.

“No,” said Lackington, “one, one peep, and we go.”

The doctor, who was what is called a staid, discreet personage, appeared somewhat unwilling to gratify our curiosity ; I, therefore, who was not quite so particular, effected our object by twitching away the veil as if by accident, and discovered a face fully corresponding in beauty with the gracefulness of the figure.

Just as I had caught a glimpse of her beauties, the doctor, who, after having assisted in depositing his new patient on the couch, had proceeded to open, by the light of the candle on the chimney-piece, a shagreen case of lancets, directed us, while he was adjusting his apparatus, to raise her head. We accordingly did so ; and judge my horror, surprise, and astonishment, the instant after Dillington had addressed her as “Maria, my love,” to hear Lackington scream out in a voice of horror, “What do I see ? is it possible ? my fickle widow, by all that’s diabo-

lical!—Why, Fanny, Fanny!” Fanny was, or seemed to be, insensible. But this was nothing to what was coming—all that had yet happened was thrown into the shade of utter darkness, by the horrible shriek of the uxorious, confiding and sentimental Dr. Martingale, who, the moment he set his eyes on the suffering angel, dropped the lancet which he held in one hand, and the candlestick and tape which were contained in the other, and exclaiming, in a tone of grief, terror, and amazement, which I never shall forget, “MY WIFE, by all that’s devilish!” rushed out of the room, and thence, out of the house into the street.

Lackington, fearing some mischief either to the doctor or himself, dashed out after him; and Dillington, who saw that the *dénouement* had somewhat prematurely arrived, ran after *him*, and I found myself standing by the sofa on which lay, quite unconscious of what was passing, the paragon of her sex—the amiable and devoted lady of Frederick Olinthus Martingale, Esq., M.D. and A.S.S.!

Under all the circumstances, however moving beauty in distress may be, I certainly had no ambition to be the "Last of the Pentweazles;" and however much I might sympathise in the pain which she was probably suffering from missing her footing on the steps of the hackney-coach, it was evidently not the first *faux-pas* she had made, and I thought the sooner I got out of the mess the better. Depositing her Venusian head on one of the pillows of the sofa, and gently kissing her cheek, in order to deceive her into the belief that she was under the care of one of the firm of Martingale, Dillington, Lackington and Co., I stepped quietly out of the room into the hall, and told the waiter that strange things had occurred since dinner, but that I would myself run round into Russell-street and send in surgical assistance, desiring him in the meantime to order one of the female servants of the house to go to the lady on the sofa.

"Directly, Sir," said the waiter; "only—I beg your pardon, Sir—you'll excuse me—the

bill, Sir. 'Thomas," continued the man, never losing sight of me or his hold of the door, "send Sally to number one. The bill, Sir," at the same moment producing from behind his back a paper as long as the city streamer in my Lord Mayor's show ; "seven pounds eight shillings and sixpence, Sir, besides the broken candlestick."

"I," said I, "have nothing to do with the bill beyond my own share of it; divide it, and——"

"Beg pardon, Sir," said the waiter, "*you* ordered the dinner—*you* engaged the room, Sir—we have the pleasure to know you as a customer here—don't know any of the other gentlemen, Sir—besides, consider, Sir—a very unpleasant affair to have occurred in Mr. Hodgson's house."

"Well," said I, admitting the justice of the waiter's claim, "of course, then, I will settle it;" saying which, I suited the word to the action by giving him a ten-pound note. "Pay the bill and yourself, and with the rest see that the

unhappy lady is taken proper care of; and, unless her husband returns to claim her, let her be removed to whatever place she chooses. I will call here to-morrow, when you can give me an account of your proceedings, and—I added in an under-tone—let me know where she lives.”

Saying which I quitted the Piazza Coffee-house, very much enlightened in my ideas of the blessings of matrimony, and the advantage of making stage-coach acquaintanceships.

END OF VOL. II.







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